CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTIETH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 26 June 1997, at 10 a.m.

President: Mrs. Krasnohorská (Slovakia)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I declare open the 770th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

On my list of speakers today I have the representatives of Japan, Poland, New Zealand, Brazil, Chile, China, Germany and Cuba. When we have reached the end of the speakers' list, as I indicated at the end of the plenary meeting last Tuesday, I intend to submit to the Conference for approval the draft decision on the appointment of a special coordinator on anti-personnel landmines presented by Australia in document CD/1465. I will also invite the Conference to take a decision on the request made by Georgia to participate as an observer in our proceedings during 1997. With your approval I intend to invite the Conference to take a decision on Georgia's request without considering it first in an informal meeting.

As you know, four of our colleagues, Ambassadors Kurokochi of Japan, Dembinski of Poland, Armstrong of New Zealand and Berguño of Chile, will no longer be among us when we resume our proceedings for the third and final part of our session at the end of July, as they have been called to other duties after having served their Governments and this Conference with great talent and distinction. I would like to commend their contributions to our work in often difficult conditions and, on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf, wish them as well as their families much success and happiness, and assure them of our friendship.

I now give the floor to the representative of Japan, Ambassador Kurokochi.

Mrs. KUROKOCHI (Japan): Madam President, may I at the outset congratulate you most warmly on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament? I wish you every success in guiding the work of the Conference at this difficult juncture, which may require your continued efforts even during the inter-sessional period. I pledge the fullest cooperation of my delegation to your endeavour. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude for the kind words you spoke about those of us who are leaving the Conference at the end of this session. Allow me also to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to your predecessors, Ambassador Berdennikov of the Russian Federation and Ambassador Diallo of Senegal, for their untiring efforts to lead our work.

It is my great pleasure to make the following two announcements today concerning measures that Japan took recently. First, on 10 June, the Government of Japan notified the United Nations Secretary-General that Japan would consent to be bound by the amended Protocol II on mines, booby-traps and other devices, and the additional Protocol IV on Blinding Laser Weapons, annexed to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). As a result, the number of States, including Japan, which have notified their consent to the Protocols became five for Protocol II and seven for Protocol IV as of that day. The Government of Japan hopes that the two protocols will enter into force as early as possible. In particular, we believe that Japan's adherence

(Mrs. Kurokochi, Japan)

to Protocol II, which contributes to the early entry into force of the Protocol, has great significance as part of international efforts toward resolving the landmine problem.

Second, on 6 June, the Japanese Diet approved the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. Accordingly, the Government of Japan will deposit an instrument of ratification with the United Nations Secretary-General early next month. It is our sincere hope that all States, especially those States whose ratification is necessary for the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to go into effect, will follow us, enabling the CTBT to enter into force as soon as possible.

These two decisions are recent examples of Japan's efforts to contribute to international disarmament. I would like to take this opportunity also to welcome on behalf of my Government the decision by President Cardoso of Brazil announced on 20 June to submit the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to the Congress for ratification. Needless to say, the NPT is one of the most important international regimes for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The NPT is now enjoying almost complete universality with only a very few exceptions. Brazil's important decision this time will certainly contribute to strengthening the international effort toward nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Now that we are at the end of the second session of the CD, and that I am speaking for the last time at the CD plenary, I refrain from elaborating Japan's positions on disarmament issues, which have already been stated on a number of occasions. Instead, today, I would like to share with you my personal observations on the working methods of this Conference on the basis of the experiences I have had since I arrived here in early 1995. I do so with humility in view of the relatively short period of time I served here compared with some of our colleagues who have much longer experience and great insight into the working of this body. However, it is with a feeling of satisfaction that I recall these years because I was able to participate in the international disarmament efforts which produced a number of significant results. The indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and the amendment of Protocol II, as well as the adoption of Protocol IV to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons are some examples of our achievements. In addition, we are now in the process of strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention. I consider myself fortunate to have been here during this period of historic importance. Having said that, I must express my deep regret that the CD, since the beginning of this year, has not started substantial work on any of the issues on our agenda. In particular, despite the fact that we all agreed to establish an ad hoc committee on a so-called fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) two years ago, when I had the honour to hold the presidency, we have not yet seen any prospect of starting negotiations on an FMCT soon because of well-known reasons.

If I may venture a frank observation, it seems to me that one of the reasons for the stalemate we are faced with today lies in the way of application of the consensus rule. I am fully aware that the consensus rule

(Mrs. Kurokochi, Japan)

is indispensable to the CD as a basic rule for disarmament negotiations, in which every participant tries to find a mutually acceptable solution, while the security concerns pertaining to each country are well protected. I dare say, however, that each member country should restrain itself from blocking the proceedings of the CD except when it needs to protect its basic security interests. When a point at issue is a procedural matter which does not prejudge the question of substance, every country should refrain as much as possible from exercising a veto. I might also add that the same practice could apply in cases of treaty negotiations. As Ambassador Dembinski of Poland stated on 22 May, it is the sovereign right of each country whether it accepts or adheres to any treaty after it is agreed and opened for signature, and no country is obligated to do so. In this sense, I wonder if it is the real aim of the consensus rule to deny the will of a majority of CD members which strongly hope to move forward treaty negotiations where there is already an agreed mandate, as in the case of FMCT negotiations. The most important thing is not to make the CD a captive to the linkage strategy because it will prevent progress in the CD. We must take a first step on whatever is agreeable. Beyond the CTBT and an FMCT, as an agenda for the international community as a whole, we should continue our efforts to find appropriate and possible issues for negotiations in the CD in the field of nuclear disarmament. It could be done by appointing a special coordinator, as my delegation proposed during the first session. In my view, both nuclear-weapon States and Non-Aligned Movement countries should take a more flexible attitude on the issue of nuclear disarmament. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to provide for a forum where a frank exchange of views can take place and thus enhance mutual trust and confidence. I believe that the best way to start this process is to appoint a special coordinator.

With regard to the format of consultations, as pointed out by Ambassador Benjelloun-Touimi of Morocco on 15 May, many of us feel that the present method of Presidential consultations needs improvement. It is obvious to anyone that the grouping mechanism as we have today does not appropriately reflect the real picture of today's international society. On the other hand, it is also true that modifying the present grouping system is not an easy task. Until and unless we come to agree on an alternative approach, it might be beneficial to make more frequent use of open-ended informal Presidential consultations or a format similar to the open-ended bureau meetings which served as a useful tool during the CTBT negotiations in which each member could express its own views freely, as past experiences showed. In order to ensure continuity, the Presidential troika (including the previous and incoming Presidents) should play an active role in such consultations.

Moreover, the question of CD expansion, with 20 countries on a waiting list, has serious implications for the operation of the CD. Bearing this in mind, I feel that perhaps the time has come for the CD to examine carefully various aspects of its working method. In this sense, the G-21 proposal on the programme of work contains a very useful proposal in paragraph 4 for appointment of special coordinators on related issues, which merits serious consideration by the CD.

(Mrs. Kurokochi, Japan)

It is my sincere hope that the CD will start its substantial negotiations as soon as possible and regain the spark of life it showed in the past two years. Finally, I would like to conclude my statement by expressing my wholehearted gratitude to all delegations, Mr. Petrovsky, Mr. Bensmail and other members of the CD secretariat, conference officers and interpreters, for the cooperation and help, as well as warm friendship, they extended to me personally and to the members of my delegation. I sincerely hope that the same support will be given to my successor.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Japan for her statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I give the floor to the representative of Poland, Ambassador Dembinski.

Mr. DEMBINSKI (Poland) (translated from French): Madam President, first of all I would like to thank you for the kind and generous words which you were kind enough to address to those of us who are going to leave this assembly in the near future.

(continued in English)

Allow me to congratulate you most cordially on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. It is particularly gratifying for me, personally, to address the Conference under your presidency since for many - I should say too many - years the presence of Slovakia among the members of the CD has been a constant concern of my delegation. You have assumed your responsibilities at a moment when the Conference is going through a particularly trying period. We trust that with your diplomatic talents and your quiet ways you will succeed in restoring constructive dialogue between us all in order to put this body once again on a positive course. In these endeavours you will have the full support and cooperation of the Polish delegation. Let me also pay due and most sincere tribute to your predecessors, Ambassador Diallo of Senegal and Ambassador Berdennikov of the Russian Federation, for the dedication, skill and perseverance with which they sought to overcome the difficulties hindering our work this year.

It is the last time I take the floor in the Conference on Disarmament. I joined this body almost five years ago and thus have outlasted most of the colleagues who were sitting around this table in mid-1992. I cordially salute those who are still here. These last five years were probably the most fruitful in the entire history of the CD. In fact, they cover the final stages of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) negotiations and the entire process of putting together the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Both of these treaties are among the most important disarmament instruments concerning weapons of mass destruction ever adopted by the international community. Taking part in these negotiations along with so many outstanding, wise and seasoned diplomats and colleagues was a rare privilege. A most rewarding experience and a uniquely gratifying end of a career.

Unfortunately, after years of historic achievements, the CD seems to be at an impasse. A few weeks ago I addressed this issue speaking in the name of my Government. Today, I should like to venture a personal view on the reasons

for this situation. Anyone who has had the privilege of serving on the Conference on Disarmament will certainly agree that in many respects this is a body which has a unique relationship with the United Nations and a unique place within the United Nations system. Certainly, this is partly due to this prestigious Salle du Conseil where most of our meetings take place. Indeed, this venue brings us in direct contact with the traditions of the League of Nations, which undertook serious, if unsuccessful, attempts to bring about a world free of arms. I would even venture to say that, set in these very special surroundings, the proceedings of the Conference on Disarmament have upheld something of the great tradition of multilateral diplomacy reminiscent of the times of the Congress of Vienna.

But unfortunately, this Chamber reminds us also of a more immediate past, namely that of the cold war. Probably, one could even maintain that the Conference on Disarmament is the last remaining body where the weight of the cold war still wields a strong influence. Each one of the organs and bodies of the United Nations system which is not directly provided for in the Charter was set up in order to address an issue, a set of problems or a situation arising at a given point in time. The various disarmament bodies of which the CD is a continuation were set up at the height of the cold war and of the East-West tensions. At that time, the rapidly growing number of missiles with nuclear warheads targeted by the two super-Powers at each other constituted a genuine threat of nuclear war with incalculable consequences for the entire world. My own country, Poland, because of its geographical location, was particularly exposed to the dangers of nuclear conflict.

At that dangerous time, negotiations related to nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament represented an efficient and legitimate method of seeking to check the nuclear arms race and avoid a worldwide nuclear conflagration. To make sure that negotiations between the two main protagonists and their allies, entrenched respectively in the tightly knit Eastern and Western blocks, were not stuck in ideological squabbling, representatives of non-aligned countries were invited to join in disarmament negotiations. As a group of countries vitally interested in the progress of negotiations and, at the same time, not involved in the ideological East-West conflict, they played a most useful role in narrowing the gaps and actively helping to search for platforms of understanding. It is in that triangular set-up that the major issues of the cold war agenda were dealt with, namely non-proliferation, chemical weapons and, finally, the prohibition of nuclear tests.

Now the cold war is over and its agenda has been exhausted. The major nuclear Powers, instead of targeting their deadly weapons at each other, work together on the most efficient, cost-effective and speedy ways of their dismantling. The costly competition in outer space has been replaced by a close collaboration in its peaceful exploration. The former Eastern and Western blocks, whose ideological confrontation was at the roots of the cold war, are merging and joining forces with a view to setting up new structures of a Pan-European security system. At the same time, new issues are emerging. They are in no way related to an improbable global conflict, but have a very

real and pressing humanitarian dimension. Anti-personnel landmines, and conventional arms in general, including small arms, have in the last decades claimed more lives than any known weapon of mass destruction.

Unfortunately, these new developments, strangely enough, have until now remained outside this Council Chamber. The Conference on Disarmament maintains its triangular structure, as if the Eastern and Western groups were still on the verge of a global conflict. Our agenda remains the same as it was 20 or more years ago at the height of the cold war. As it were, the CD reflects a bygone world and acts as if the clock of history had stopped at the threshold of the twenty-first century. It is therefore of no surprise that for the moment this important and supremely competent body seems unable to move forward. It is my fear that as long as the past of the cold war has not been exorcised, the CD will be hard put to face up to the challenges of the years to come.

Why should the CD stick to its no longer relevant triangular structure, rather than adopt the regional one which is in force throughout the United Nations system? Why should it not make a serious attempt to bring its agenda in line with the needs and expectations of the new emerging world? Why should it not examine a further expansion of its membership on the merits of each applicant, rather than invoke ideological arguments, including that of "regional balance"?

Nations have spent enough time, energy and money to invent, produce, accumulate and improve all kinds of deadly weapons, both more and less sophisticated and powerful. Today most States, including those with the biggest arsenals and most potent weapons, seem to agree that the time has come to begin the process of disarmament in earnest. The obstacles on this road no longer are ideological. They have become eminently practical, such as know-how and cost involved. Therefore, the international community seems to expect that, rather than spend precious time on ideological debates, the CD, the most competent body in the field of disarmament, would resolve to come to grips with the real practical issues. The fissile material cut-off is a point in case. By adopting a step-by-step approach, the CD can substantially contribute to ultimately alleviating the constant fear of a global conflagration which has been a permanent feature of international relations in the latter part of this century. The CD should also, in my view, turn its attention to arms which, rather than posing a hypothetical threat, actually kill thousands of innocent people virtually under our eyes. Anti-personnel landmines (APLs) are certainly among them.

In my private, well-considered view, the Conference on Disarmament has to stay open to all those who, rather than prestige, seek to, and are able to, make an effective contribution to its daily endeavours. It must persevere in the further streamlining of its methods of work in order, inter alia, to ensure all members of an equal and open say on all substantive issues without any constraints. I wish this body every success in the days, months and years ahead. It takes so little to succeed, they say. All one needs is the will to succeed.

(Mr. Dembinski, Poland)

Let me, in the end, express my friendship, gratitude and appreciation to the distinguished Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, the members of the Conference secretariat and interpreters who, as usual, are remarkably competent. To all my colleagues and friends, best wishes for every success and personal well-being.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Poland for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I give the floor to the representative of New Zealand, Ambassador Armstrong.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (New Zealand): Madam President, New Zealand takes particular pleasure in congratulating you on the assumption of the presidency of this Conference, the third CD President drawn from among the new members. I would like to acknowledge today the close cooperation New Zealand has always enjoyed with your predecessors. You may be sure of the New Zealand delegation's full cooperation during your term. I also pay a warm tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Diallo of Senegal, for her hard work on behalf of the Conference.

This is the last occasion on which I will address the Conference on Disarmament, not because I am leaving Geneva but because New Zealand will be represented from the start of the third session by its first, newly appointed Ambassador for Disarmament. I am confident that he will enjoy the same friendly cooperation that all colleagues have extended to me over the past few years.

There is no doubt that this is a critical year for the Conference. The various successes of the recent past contrast with our inability today to reach agreement on the new issues to be negotiated. New Zealand is not among those fearing for the future of this body, however. True, we are facing a frustrating stalemate in our substantive work. Our procedures are tending to hinder rather than to help us find a way forward, and in that regard I welcome the positive practical suggestions we have heard this morning from Ambassador Kurokochi for review of working methods. Certainly, we have not yet been able to untangle the Gordian knot described last September by the Special Coordinator on the agenda, the distinguished former Ambassador of Algeria.

But on the other hand, there are proposals on the table for our consideration, and we expect that there will be more to come following the inter-sessional period. New Zealand will continue to join efforts to find the middle path. Agreeing on the issues on which we will work will require compromise and flexibility on all sides. New Zealand, for its part, is ready to start now on the cut-off negotiations, in accordance with the report of the Special Coordinator, in a way which acknowledges the different views that have been expressed as to its scope. We are also ready to begin in this Conference a multilateral dialogue on nuclear disarmament, including consideration of the next steps that this Conference could negotiate in pursuit of the elimination of all nuclear weapons, which, taken together with other tracks outside the CD, can be viewed as a part of a comprehensive programme. We would not object

to the appointment of a special coordinator to consult on a possible mandate for negotiations on landmines when that decision comes before us today.

The Conference's potential to find a way through the current impasse is strengthened, I believe, by the expansion last June of its membership. If I am permitted a moment of retrospection, I want to recall the strong sense of common interest and cooperation that existed among 23 countries drawn from all political quarters and all parts of the world. We had a goal, and we found ways of working together to achieve it. The path was long and sometimes discouraging, but I have to say that it was always interesting, and it will remain one of the highlights of my time in this Conference.

If I have a parting message, it is to express the hope that the same common interest, and a willingness to cooperate across group lines, will be generated among the entire membership, and that in this way the Conference will be able soon to get down to work. Finally, I would like to thank all of my colleagues for the friendship and cooperation which I have always enjoyed in our work together, as well as my appreciation for the work of Mr. Petrovsky, Mr. Bensmail and all members of the CD secretariat.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of New Zealand for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I give the floor to the representative of Brazil, Ambassador Lafer.

Mr. LAFER (Brazil): Madam President, allow me at the outset to extend warm congratulations on your assumption of the presidency. Your experience and diplomatic skill will serve the Conference well during these trying but challenging times. Be assured of my delegation's, as well as my own, full support and cooperation in the discharge of your responsibilities. Having first discussed with you the issue of Slovakia's membership in the Conference on Disarmament, it is a pleasure for me personally and for Brazil to see you in the presidency. I also take the opportunity to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Absa Claude Diallo of Senegal, whose serene and impartial search for consensus has won the admiration and respect of us all.

I take the floor today to announce to the Conference on Disarmament that on Friday last, 20 June 1997, the President of Brazil, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, requested Congressional authorization for Brazil to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This was referred to today by Ambassador Kurokochi in her statement, and I would like to thank her, and it was referred to in our last session by the United States delegation. May I now take this occasion to explain the process that led Brazil to this decision?

The President on 20 June stated that the decision "represents the conclusion of a process begun by Brazilian society itself". He recalled the 1998 Brazilian Constitution which provides in its articles that there must be peaceful coexistence among nations, and determines that nuclear energy be used exclusively for peaceful purposes. The decision follows a series of international commitments in the nuclear sphere undertaken by Brazil over the past years in close coordination with Argentina. Such commitments gave

international expression to the above-mentioned constitutional determination, and contributed to maintaining a positive understanding with our Latin American neighbours and other international partners. They included the renunciation of the development of nuclear explosive devices, the creation of a Brazilian-Argentine inspection mechanism in the nuclear field, the full application of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, after an amendment process in whose successful conclusion I myself participated as the then Minister of External Relations of Brazil, and the negotiation of a full-scope safeguard agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

As is often stressed, measures such as these by themselves already offer legally binding guarantees of Brazil's unequivocal commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, a commitment made even clearer by adherence to the NPT. The world today is fundamentally different from that of nearly 30 years ago, when the NPT was originally conceived. The sombre perspective of a fourfold or fivefold increase in the number of nuclear-weapon States never materialized. Gone is the cold war. The escalation of the nuclear arms race has been superseded by a process of nuclear roll-back. Enduring nuclear arsenals are increasingly questioned from both outside and inside possessor States. Military nuclear doctrines seem outdated and unconvincing in attempting to justify the continued existence of nuclear weapons. As pointed out by President Fernando Henrique Cardoso himself, nuclear weapons, once at the heart of super-Power military planning, are today "increasingly seen only as a drain on resources and as a source of risk and uncertainty. Even within the nuclear Powers, public opinion is coming to acknowledge that the bomb only raises the level of insecurity". The NPT itself has become a more dynamic and a more universal instrument. The strengthening of its review process and the guidance provided by specific principles and objectives bring greater focus to Treaty obligations and goals, and reinvigorate the Treaty's institutional forums. States parties can have a more frequent say on all aspects of the Treaty, particularly on the attainment of goals in the fields of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and nuclear disarmament.

Adherence to the NPT will add one forum in which Brazil, in the words of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, "will continue to work for general and complete disarmament on a balanced and secure basis. We will do it from within the Treaty, acting to correct its imbalances together with our main partners". In doing so, Brazil draws guidance from the continuity of objectives of its foreign policy in the interrelated fields of disarmament and non-proliferation. We thus continue to believe that the best guarantee against nuclear-weapon proliferation is to make sure that nothing remains to be proliferated - a certainty which can only be obtained by the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. That is why Brazil will continue to stand alongside those who strive for the commitment to such a goal by all States within realistic phases and time-frames. That is also why pursuing and bringing to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament have long been legitimate aspirations of the international community.

In my last intervention I stressed the importance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on 8 July 1996. It seems clear to me that negotiations on this matter, as the Court has said, are more than

(Mr. Lafer, Brazil)

an obligation of behaviour. All States have a stake in their outcome, and therefore the right to press for their immediate commencement, as well as to participate in them. A related objective also worth mentioning here is the consolidation of the nuclear-weapon-free-zone concept. The recent recognition by the United Nations General Assembly that the development of nuclear-weapon-free zones is gradually freeing the entire southern hemisphere of nuclear weapons highlights a trend we intend to continue to foster and encourage as a concrete contribution to disarmament and non-proliferation.

To conclude, Brazil has an extensive history of participation in efforts towards disarmament and non-proliferation. Our objectives in these areas are long-standing and have been clearly reaffirmed. Their attainment is a continuing aim of our policies. As President Fernando Henrique Cardoso himself has made clear, "joining the NPT ... will be yet another contribution Brazil makes to the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation".

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Brazil for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Chile, Ambassador Berguño.

Mr. BERGUÑO (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Madam President, I would like to express sincere appreciation for your kind words and good wishes to those of us who are leaving our posts in this Conference. It is really a great pleasure to see you conducting our debates. I wish you success and assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation. I pay tribute to your predecessors, Ambassadors Berdennikov and Diallo, and I welcome the fact that, in keeping with long-standing practice in our Conference, you started your term by holding consultations with the Ambassador of Senegal. It is a significant circumstance that your countries and mine joined the Conference on Disarmament together, united in the endeavour to strengthen it and renew it radically.

In taking the floor for the last time in this chamber, I contemplate the dramatic murals with which José María Sert decorated this Council Chamber, which so appropriately evokes the Hispanic origin of international law by means of the bronze plaque bearing the illustrious name of Francisco de Vitoria; I observe the familiar faces of friends with whom we have shared events and negotiations of historic importance; I feel the attentive and unobtrusive presence of the secretariat, the voices of interpreters, the invisible trace of the translators; and the atmosphere which enriches our proceedings with a tradition, feelings and aspirations that are shared by different generations.

When I came to Geneva for the first time, more than a decade ago, I thought that the place with the most character, where the fabric of mysterious events was being woven, was the Green Room in GATT. Remote and distant from the tumultuous labours of UNCTAD, which a great Italian politician, Amintore Fanfani, described as the Eroica symphony of the developing world, the Green Room was more than a meeting place, it was a temple for initiates. In recent years I have penetrated, without yet finding my way, into this

(Mr. Berguño, Chile)

labyrinth of the Conference on Disarmament. Today I am sure that our chamber of marble and ochre tints, with its early twentieth-century decor, and especially the invisible walls of consensus and lack of consensus, not only has more character than the Green Room but leaves a mark on those of us who live in it temporarily.

In this universe we find ourselves facing our own reality. We wonder how we can ensure its materialization in a common undertaking: agenda, programme of work, subsidiary bodies, special coordinators, Friends of the Chair, a whole complex mechanism to secure what we call the effective functioning of the Conference. A system of arrangements that sometimes gives us the impression of 100 mirrors indefinitely reflecting the same image in time and space. I sincerely believe that this impression is only a momentary digression and actually I would like to expound my thoughts a little more and refer to the rules of procedure - a special subject, and one which is terribly Cartesian and devoid of the touch of poetry or nostalgia which usually prevails in a farewell speech.

While I will confine myself exclusively to this subject, without repeating our national viewpoints on matters of substance, which I have set out many times, I nevertheless wish to welcome Ambassador Lafer's announcement concerning Brazil's accession to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, his reference to the nuclear-weapon-free zone in the southern hemisphere and the revision of the Treaty of Tlatelolco which we embarked on when he was a minister, in the historic Baron de Rio Branco room.

As the subject is a dry one, I wish to allay any misgivings among members of the Conference by saying that it will be elaborated on in a document that the Chilean delegation will pass to the secretariat. It is a proposal for the revision and updating of rules that the inexorable passage of time and the living practice of the Conference has made anachronistic and inapplicable; introducing in the body of those rules the decisions that have already been adopted and the agreed declarations by Presidents on matters of procedure; bringing the structure into line with a more logical arrangement; and clarifying, as far as possible, questions that, when they are removed from their procedural context, become obstacles to consensus. One of these matters is what is known as the programme of work. This programme, in the strict terms of rule 28, is nothing more than allocating a place, an order for dealing with the thematic elements contained in rule 27: it is only a bridge between an agenda item and the way of dealing with it, through a committee, or a coordinator, or a Friend of the Chair. In happier and more innocent times, free of original sin, all this work could be entrusted to the President, assisted by the secretariat, under rule 30.

From another aspect, rule 21 is solely an exhortation to achieve consensus and cannot become a means of creating linkages or blocking decisions. The Ambassador of Cuba made a comment in one of our meetings that sums up both the error into which we have fallen and the means to remedy matters. Whoever has legitimate problems with an agenda item or with provisions for dealing with it should say so. It would be really surprising

(Mr. Berguño, Chile)

to find that as a result all of us have one problem or another with one item or another and that as a consequence we have adopted an agenda whose application will have to be postponed indefinitely.

I recognize that the proposal submitted by Chile is not a simple codification and that it also contains elements of openness to the outside world, the one that is looking at us with ever greater frequency from the public gallery; of broader participation and greater clarification of the expansion mechanisms. These are matters that some might consider premature innovations. When the history of our rules of procedure is studied, there emerges the living reality, the functional organ in tune with the times, that this Conference on Disarmament has always been.

This is the image which I retain and which accompanies me and will continue to accompany me, at the moment when I bid farewell to you all; express my gratitude to Ambassador Petrovsky, Abdelkader Bensmail, all the members of this efficient secretariat; and express appreciation for the warm welcome, the friendship and the solidarity of all of us who are working for the noble goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Chile for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I give the floor to the representative of China, Ambassador Sha.

Mr. SHA (China) (translated from Chinese): First of all, Madam President, please allow me on behalf of my delegation to extend my heartfelt congratulations to you on your assumption of the CD's presidency. My delegation will cooperate fully with you. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my keen appreciation to the successive Presidents since the beginning of this year's session for their efforts aimed at an early start of the CD's substantive work. Availing myself of this opportunity, I would also like to bid farewell to our former colleagues who left their posts of heads of delegations to the CD this year. Their contributions to the work of the CD in the recent past, especially the negotiations on the CTBT, will be remembered for ever. Meanwhile, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the colleagues who have taken up their posts recently.

Today the Chinese delegation wishes to focus its comments on the issue of anti-personnel landmines (APLs). The APL issue has become a hot topic in recent years. Differing views have been expressed on this issue in the Conference on Disarmament. Some regard it as a purely humanitarian issue. Some believe that it falls within the realm of disarmament and national security. Others think it is an issue with both a humanitarian and a security bearing. Consequently, there are proponents of a total ban on APLs and strong opponents of such a ban who argue instead for appropriate restrictions on the use of APLs. There are still others who favour a phased approach leading towards the ultimate prohibition of such weapons. As to how to address the issue of APLs, some are bent on the "Ottawa Process" aimed towards a total ban; some regard the CD as the appropriate forum for negotiations; others maintain that the issue should be further handled within the framework of the

(Mr. Sha, China)

amended landmine Protocol to the CCW. There are still others who have the benign hope that the three mechanisms may complement one another. In short, APLs have grown into a big issue though they remain simple weapons. In the light of this, the Chinese delegation believes it is necessary to clarify and reach some common understanding on the origin of the APL issue, thereby facilitating the pursuit of the best solution.

First, the origin of the APL issue. Any conventional weapon, including APLs, can be used to kill or injure people. This is a common fact. However, as a purely defensive weapon, the APL has received "special treatment". This is due to two reasons: the side effects of old-type APLs and their indiscriminate use; and the less than adequate post-conflict demining efforts. Therefore, in order to eliminate the APL's threat to innocent civilians, to facilitate post-conflict reconstruction and to resolve the so-called APL issue, efforts should be made in the above-mentioned two aspects. Sweepingly blaming landmines themselves or any use of APLs for all civilian casualties is not true to the facts, and such an attitude cannot constitute our starting point for addressing and resolving the landmine issue. It is important to come to such an understanding, since only after we have found the true cause of the issue can we proceed to seek fitting solutions.

Second, solutions to the APL issue. Proceeding from the above, the Chinese delegation holds that the fundamental objective in resolving the landmine issue should be the prevention of civilian casualties, with our efforts concentrated on clearing those old-type landmines, especially APLs, left over from past conflicts and overcoming the shortcomings of the old-type landmines and preventing their indiscriminate use. If the CD decides to address the landmine issue, it should seek solutions in these aspects.

The most pressing issue facing the international community is the early elimination of the threat posed by landmines to innocent civilians. Almost all such casualties have been caused by those landmines already deployed. So long as these landmines remain uncleared, people living in landmine-affected places cannot enjoy tranquillity, let alone a peaceful life and economic reconstruction. This problem will not be talked away, and the adoption of a convention on the so-called total prohibition of landmines will not offer an immediate solution. The international community has made some efforts and progress in post-conflict demining, but much more is called for. The Chinese delegation hopes that all capable countries, especially those developed countries with better financial resources, technologies and equipment, will make greater efforts to help remove landmines left over from past conflicts.

Furthermore, for various reasons, there are still many landmines on the territories of a number of countries deployed or abandoned by foreign troops. Some of them were abandoned during the Second World War. The countries concerned have requested that mine-deploying countries shoulder the responsibility for removing these landmines. The Chinese delegation is of the view that either for the purpose of resolving mine-related humanitarian concerns, or in the interests of fulfilling arms control obligations, the clearance of abandoned landmines should become an important part in the solution of the APL question. In this connection, reference can be drawn from

(Mr. Sha, China)

the relevant provisions of the CWC. When addressing the landmine issue, the CD should seriously discuss the question of demining, including that of abandoned landmines.

The Chinese delegation is of the view that alongside efforts to clear landmines left over from past conflicts it is necessary to prevent the indiscriminate use of landmines, especially the old-type dumb mines. Only in such a way can we resolve the landmine issue once and for all. We are pleased to note that in May 1996 States parties to the CCW agreed to amend and strengthen the landmine Protocol. The amended Protocol expressly prohibits the use of undetectable landmines, bans the production of such landmines after 1 January 1997, and strictly confines the use of non-self-destructing landmines to perimeter-marked areas to ensure the exclusion of civilians. The Protocol sets forth technical specifications on self-destruction self-deactivation of APLs, thus restricting the military life of almost all APLs to 120 days. Considering the fact that the indiscriminate use of APLs mainly takes place in domestic armed conflicts and is committed by non-governmental military groups, the amended Protocol prohibits the transfer of any mine to any recipient other than a State and to States which are not bound by this Protocol, and extends the scope of application to armed conflicts not of an international character. These important new prohibitions and restrictions are of great significance for preventing the indiscriminate use of landmines and facilitating the removal of landmines already deployed. We are convinced that so long as all countries accede to and strictly abide by the amended landmine Protocol, the difficulties in post-conflict demining efforts will be greatly reduced and the question of civilian casualties can be thoroughly resolved.

Third, the total prohibition of APLs. The Chinese delegation never doubted the sincerity and enthusiasm of the countries concerned in promoting the total prohibition of APLs, and welcomes the unilateral national measures by some of these countries towards a total ban. China is in favour of imposing strict and feasible restrictions on APLs and their use, thereby achieving the objective of an ultimate ban in a step-by-step manner. We are of the view that though the total ban is aimed at realizing humanitarian ideals, the elimination of an entire category of purely defensive conventional weapons is obviously a major disarmament measure. Therefore, when addressing the APL issue, the dual aspects of humanitarian concerns and legitimate national security requirements have to be taken into consideration when formulating specific measures or steps. In the final analysis, ensuring national security itself is an important aspect of humanitarian concerns.

As for security purposes, the military value of APLs differs from country to country, from time to time and from place to place. Different countries have totally different degrees of reliance on APLs. For those countries possessing advanced weapon systems, which enjoy collective defence through military alliances and a better security environment and have experienced no major wars on their territories for a long time, APLs may not be of great military value. They may even regard other countries' APLs as a nuisance to their overseas military operations. However, for developing countries like China, which have long land borders and an uncertain security

(Mr. Sha, China)

environment and lack advanced defensive weapons, APLs remain an indispensable, legitimate and conventional means of national defence. In fact, even some top military Powers in the world have indicated they also have security concerns that can be covered only by APLs.

In short, China is not opposed to the objective of prohibition of APLs realized in a phased approach, but cannot agree to an immediate total ban. In order to meet its legitimate territorial defence requirements, China cannot but reserve its legitimate right to use APLs on its own territories before alternative means are found and defensive capabilities established. China can only accept an international APL agreement that fully accommodates its above-mentioned security concerns. China has always pursued an independent foreign policy of peace and never engaged in overseas aggression. We have no intention of using landmines in other countries. Should China use APLs in legitimate circumstances, it would be for the purpose of defence against foreign military intervention or aggression, safeguarding its national unification and territorial integrity and ensuring a peaceful life for its own people.

Fourth, mechanisms for addressing the APL issue. There are several mechanisms at present for addressing the APL issue. Many delegations have voiced their views as to which is the best. The Chinese delegation would also like to take this opportunity to express its preference.

In the first place, there is the CCW mechanism. For addressing humanitarian restrictions on conventional arms, the ideal mechanism is the CCW and its protocols. First, the Convention covers many kinds of conventional weapons, including landmines, that are subject to humanitarian restrictions, thereby constituting an independent legal system of its own. Second, the conclusion of the landmine Protocol to the Convention and amendments to it have taken into account both humanitarian concerns and security interests and have accumulated experience in this regard. Third, the amended landmine Protocol has broadened its scope of application, remedied shortcomings relating to old-type landmines and set forth further restrictions on the use of landmines. Fourth, most countries capable of developing, improving and manufacturing landmines have acceded to the Convention. Fifth, the amended landmine Protocol stipulates that a conference of States parties should be held annually to review the operation of the Protocol, a provision not seen in any other multilateral disarmament agreements. The annual conference will also consider the development of technologies to protect civilians against the indiscriminate effects of landmines. Admittedly, a shortcoming of this mechanism is that the Convention lacks universal adherence. In fact, most countries which voted in favour of the fifty-first United Nations General Assembly resolution banning APLs, including some of the worst mine-inflicted countries, have yet to accede to the CCW and its protocols. It is safe to say that, if the amended landmine Protocol can be universally and strictly observed, the damaging effects of old-type long-life landmines will be eliminated and the use of landmines will be exclusively aimed at military targets. Therefore, judging by its objective nature, international legal obligations and the number of States parties, the CCW and its protocols provide us with the best mechanism to address the APL issue. The Chinese delegation prefers achieving the ultimate total prohibition of APLs in a phased approach within the CCW framework.

(Mr. Sha, China)

The second mechanism is the CD mechanism. Judging by their purely defensive nature and their limited impact on international security, landmines can hardly be treated as a priority item on the multilateral disarmament agenda. Moreover, the time is not ripe for the prohibition of small defensive conventional weapons like APLs. As the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, the CD should instead concentrate on those arms control and disarmament issues that have a significant impact on international security and stability. In this regard, the Chinese delegation's position is clear-cut. Besides, it is obviously inappropriate for the CD to take up the APL issue alone and make no arrangements for other agenda items. Nevertheless, considering that the overwhelming majority of the CD members demand or are prepared to address the landmine issue at an early stage, the Chinese delegation is willing to show flexibility. We will not object to the appointment of a special coordinator in the CD to deal with the APL issue. For China, what matters is the objective of the negotiations, not the negotiating forum. If the CD decides by consensus to address the landmine issue, it should be capable of accomplishing the task given its function, representation, expertise and experience. In accordance with the guidelines adopted by the United Nations Disarmament Commission, any arms control or disarmament agreement should not in any way diminish national security. In addressing the landmine issue, it is imperative to accommodate both humanitarian concerns and national security interests, taking into account the specific conditions of different countries and bearing in mind the priorities and real effects in mine clearance, with a view to adopting proper and feasible measures that attract universal adherence and, in a step-by-step manner, realizing the ultimate objective of a total ban on APLs.

The third mechanism is the "Ottawa Process". The Chinese delegation has taken note of the intentions of the Ottawa Process to negotiate and conclude an international convention on a total ban on APLs before the end of this year. We respect the sovereign decisions of the participating countries and understand their humanitarian intentions and wishes. It is our view, however, that this process focuses solely on humanitarian concerns while neglecting or not adequately taking into account many countries' legitimate military requirements for the use of APLs in defending their territories. Furthermore, it takes no account of the universality that is crucial for any truly effective international agreement. Therefore, the practical value and realistic effects of this process are doubtful. We also note that some participants in the process are members of military alliances. The truth is that, even if these countries themselves ban landmines, they can still benefit directly or indirectly from the use of APLs in joint overseas military operations as their allied partners may not impose a total ban. In contrast, those countries outside of any military alliance and relying on themselves for national defence will have no access to such benefits. Moreover, it remains to be seen whether the Ottawa Process will have a negative impact on the authority of the CD as the "sole" multilateral disarmament negotiating body, and on the entry into force of the amended landmine Protocol to the CCW.

I now turn to China's actions in support of humanitarian efforts. China has made active efforts to accede to international humanitarian laws. China has always attached great importance to humanitarian laws applicable to war

situations, and has taken concrete and effective measures to reduce human suffering caused by wars. Since 1929, China has been a State party to the Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. In 1981, China participated in the conclusion of the CCW and its protocols and was among the first group of countries to sign and ratify these instruments. As a matter of fact, only 15 countries ratified the Convention in 1982, not including some countries which today seem to be very active. Subsequently, and proceeding from the same spirit, China participated in the negotiation and conclusion of the Protocol on Blinding Laser Weapons and the amendment of the landmine Protocol. China has made significant contributions to the enactment of new international humanitarian laws and to the enhancement of restrictions on APLs. The Chinese Government will, in a spirit of humanitarianism, consider positively the ratification of these protocols at an early date.

China strictly abides by the CCW and has carried out a large-scale demining campaign. Chinese troops strictly abide by the CCW and other relevant international laws. They confine their research on and use of landmines to the scope permitted by the CCW and have never violated the Convention. Proceeding from humanitarian considerations, China has never developed booby-traps. In order to protect civilians, Chinese troops carried out an unprecedented large-scale demining campaign from the beginning of 1993 to the end of 1994 in the border areas of the Guangxi Autonomous Region and Yunnan province. They removed nearly 1 million landmines and other explosive devices, opened up more than 170 routes for cross-border trade and transferred to the local people more than 90 million square metres of landmine-free areas which had been walked through by military mineclearers. This campaign provided a guarantee for the physical safety of the local people and their economic construction.

China has tried its best to provide assistance to landmine-affected countries. The Chinese Government has always been concerned about the civilian casualties caused by landmines in mine-affected regions and supported international humanitarian efforts to prevent the indiscriminate harming of civilians by landmines. China has provided demining equipment and training in demining free of charge to Cambodia and other countries. The Chinese Government will continue to support international cooperation in mine clearance and provide demining assistance within its capabilities to other developing countries.

China exercises strict control on the transfer of landmines. In order to prevent the indiscriminate use of landmines, China has always taken a very prudent and responsible attitude towards the export of landmines. China participated in the consensus of the forty-ninth United Nations General Assembly resolution on the moratorium on the export of APLs. In fact, since this resolution was adopted, China has not exported any APLs. During the CCW Review Conference in 1996, the Chinese Government solemnly declared that it would implement a moratorium on the export of APLs which are not in conformity with the technical specifications contained in the amended landmine Protocol. Therefore, as to the prohibition of exports of APLs, the amended Protocol has already entered into force for China.

(Mr. Sha, China)

On the issue of APLs, the Chinese delegation has taken a realistic and cool-headed attitude and an objective approach. We hope, with the help of an analysis of the root cause of this issue, to seek balanced and feasible solutions acceptable to all parties. In the light of the divergent views on this issue, the Chinese delegation is ready to join other delegations in further exploring this issue in the Conference on Disarmament.

My statement has been long and has taken up a great deal of time. However, this is the first time I have made a statement this year, so I apologize.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of China for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of Germany, Ambassador Seibert.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): Madam President, please accept my sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of this Conference. We are fully aware that at the difficult juncture at which the Conference finds itself, the responsibility and burden of your office are particularly heavy. We trust, however, in your skilful stewardship to overcome the present stalemate and engage the Conference once again in meaningful substantive work. I want to assure you of the full cooperation and support of my delegation in this endeavour. In this context, I would also like to thank your predecessors, Ambassadors Diallo and Berdennikov, for their unrelenting efforts to this end.

When I first took the floor for a brief intervention at the end of May, I paid tribute to the outstanding achievements of which this Conference has every reason to be proud: the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which has recently entered into force, and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty. They are monuments of the disarmament process and far-reaching contributions to peace and stability. They have been the result of a strong commitment and of years of intensive, sometimes painstaking, negotiations. The Conference has thus set high standards for itself against which it will be measured by the international community. While it may not be possible to produce spectacular results every year, there is no justification for getting bogged down in an unacceptable stalemate.

The issue of a ban on anti-personnel landmines has been high on the international agenda both as a humanitarian concern and as an important arms control issue. Germany is fully committed to an early start of the envisaged negotiations in the framework of the Ottawa Process. At the same time, we believe that the Conference on Disarmament, given its universal role and its expertise in disarmament matters, should make its own important contribution towards the goal of a comprehensive and legally binding international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines. We are deeply disappointed that the CD has been unable to date to reach agreement even on the appointment of a special coordinator whose task would have been to explore how the APL issue could be addressed by the CD. Instead, the Conference got entangled in a philosophical debate as to whether it should first decide on a special coordinator or on a work programme.

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

My delegation remains prepared to discuss any proposal on the table, including the very commendable effort by our previous Chairman, Ambassador Diallo, to seek common ground on the programme of work. The proposals made by Ambassador Diallo contain elements that Germany can fully support. Let me just recall that the Coordinator of the Western Group stated in the last plenary of last year's session that "ad hoc committees could be set up immediately on negative security assurances, outer space and transparency in armaments". The Conference could, at this stage, at least have appointed a special coordinator on APLs and, if deemed useful, coordinators on a programme of work, the effectiveness of the CD and its enlargement. This might have provided a fresh impetus to our work.

In his statement of 23 January, my predecessor drew the attention of the Conference to the need for early negotiations on a multilateral, effectively verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty. Such a treaty would be an important contribution to the process of nuclear disarmament and, at the same time, also strengthen the NPT regime. Upon extensive in-depth consultations by Ambassador Shannon, the CD reached consensus in 1995 on a mandate for cut-off negotiations. It constitutes a solid basis for the CD to begin work immediately. By opening negotiations on a cut-off, the CD would also positively respond to resolution 48/75 L adopted unanimously by the forty-eighth United Nations General Assembly in 1993. With regard to the strengthening of the NPT regime, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Lafer on the decision by President Cardoso to submit the NPT to Congress for ratification. Germany welcomes this step as an important contribution to the efforts for achieving universality of the NPT regime.

The events during this session have demonstrated again the self-defeating effects of holding progress in one area hostage to progress in other areas. Linkages are a recipe for blocking any kind of progress in the CD and should be discarded once and for all. It is, in the view of my delegation, particularly inappropriate and illogical to maintain a linkage between a decision on the programme of work and the nomination of a special coordinator, whose task would be to explore the possibility of a consensus on including a specific item in such a programme of work. It is equally unhelpful to stress priorities if they are meant to exclude or deny other priorities. All issues should be examined on their own merits. The Conference should then take whatever steps are possible. They can provide a basis to build upon and to work for further progress. The procedural tug-of-war has not only been unproductive. It has also prevented us from focusing on important issues which are both urgent and ripe for negotiation. We welcome the valuable suggestions by Ambassador Kurokochi and Ambassador Berguño today to make the work of the CD more effective.

I am aware that I have been rather candid in some of my comments. But I have done so on behalf of a country which continues to believe in the unique vocation and the responsibility of the CD to maintain the momentum of the multilateral disarmament process.

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

I conclude by expressing our sincere hope that this Conference will resume its work at the end of next month with a renewed sense of commitment to engage in meaningful and substantive work, and thus live up to its responsibilities as the only permanent multilateral forum for global disarmament negotiations.

We fully support your efforts, Madam President, to consult informally with delegations during the inter-sessional period to ensure that the Conference will no longer squander its energies in rhetoric and procedural manoeuvres, but engage in what it is supposed to do - to conduct real negotiations with a view to enhance peace and security.

Finally, I should like to extend my warmest wishes to all Ambassadors who are leaving the CD and thank them for their friendship and cooperation.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Germany for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the representative of Cuba, Ambassador Amat Fores.

Mr. AMAT FORES (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Madam President, first and foremost allow me to convey my greetings to you and express our appreciation to you for the efforts you are making so that this forum will deal with questions related to the reasons for its existence, namely the attainment of effective disarmament measures. Our sincere gratitude also to the Ambassador of Senegal, who conducted the work of the CD before you with such dedication. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the secretariat and all those delegations which welcomed us with kindness four months ago when we took up our duties in this United Nations office and in particular at the Conference on Disarmament. You can be assured that the delegation of Cuba will work sincerely in the quest for the most appropriate and necessary solutions for the problems that fall within the remit of this Conference, in which we participate actively. We also say farewell today to those friends who are leaving their work in this Conference and wish them success in their lives and future work.

As early as his 1970 report, the United Nations Secretary-General said that "were such weapons [nuclear weapons] ever to be used in numbers, hundreds of millions of people might be killed, and civilization as we know it, as well as organized community life, would inevitably come to an end in the countries involved in the conflict. Many of those who survived the immediate destruction ... would be exposed to widely spreading radioactive contamination, and would suffer from long-term effects of irradiation and transmit, to their offspring, a genetic burden that would become manifest in the disabilities of later generations". To mention only one example of the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, let us remember what happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, cities that were victims of the use of these weapons. Various estimates have been made of the casualties that were caused, but it is difficult to calculate the exact number of irradiated persons who may have died after having fled the cities. According to one of the sources consulted, in Hiroshima there were 78,000 dead and 84,000 injured, while in Nagasaki there were 27,000 dead and 41,000 injured. Also thousands of people were

reported missing. These figures reflect only conservative estimates of the effects on people. What can we say about the devastating damage to the infrastructure of these cities and the long-term effects on the survivors and the genetic changes in the descendants of those persons? Of course, we are referring to tiny bombs compared with the present ones. Much of mankind seems to have forgotten these facts and the possibility that this may recur in completely different circumstances, in which the destructive power of nuclear weapons has increased in an immeasurable way.

Hand in hand with the qualitative and quantitative development of these weapons of mass extermination, increasing international concern emerged for their elimination. In 1978, at the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, it was recognized that nuclear disarmament was the priority. What has happened since then? What lesson has been learnt from the facts, and why does this Conference not pay attention to that which is a fundamental demand of the non-aligned countries but which should be a matter of concern for all? What happens is that a handful of countries which in other forums stand out as showing the greatest respect for United Nations resolutions and the recommendations and decisions of the international community in general take no notice in the Conference on Disarmament of, for instance, what was said by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion, or the provisions of the General Assembly resolution; or the considerations recorded by the eminent persons who participated in the study contained in the Canberra report; or the recommendations contained in the resolution of the Sub-Commission for the Protection of Minorities; or what the developing countries represented in the Non-Aligned Movement point out at their summits and ministerial meetings; or even what is said in article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and what is being demanded of us by so many non-governmental organizations and eminent persons who are carrying out laudable efforts to create a world free of nuclear weapons.

The inflexibility of these few delegations has led this forum to consider forms and methods that would enable it to find ways and means of dealing with a category of conventional weapons - anti-personnel landmines. If there were understanding and the often referred-to flexibility, the solution could be also to negotiate on nuclear weapons, which have been described as weapons of mass destruction, and identify ways and means, within the context of the programme of work, that would make it possible to analyse other subjects such as security assurances for States that do not possess nuclear weapons and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, to mention only two topics that do enjoy priority.

We do not know how world public opinion will face up to the solution that some are trying to impose. What we do know is that if this Conference ignores the demands of the delegations of the Group of 21 and many other delegations concerning the treatment in this forum of a phased programme for nuclear disarmament, we will be able to consider this cause lost and we will be leaving in the hands of the nuclear Powers the decisions on what suits them best from the viewpoint of what they regard as their national security, threats and the role that these arms play in deterrence.

(Mr. Amat Fores, Cuba)

Let us not say we were not warned. As has already been said by one delegation in this forum, there is no balance between conventional and nuclear weapons, either in theory or on the battlefield. The use of anti-personnel landmines as legitimate weapons has not been banned. There has always been concern, a concern shared by Cuba, with regard to their indiscriminate and irresponsible use and the damage that they cause among the civilian population. To accommodate these concerns Protocol II to the 1980 Convention has been amended. If States comply with the provisions of this Protocol and the Convention itself there should not be any casualties to mourn. On the other side lie the problems that can be caused by mines in areas of past armed conflicts. We should address these problems as an immediate step. We have already informed the United Nations Secretary-General of our readiness to participate in these operations provided that they are of a humanitarian nature.

Humanitarian concerns are understandable when they are underpinned by policies of governments, organizations and eminent persons that are notable for genuine protection of the civilian population. This is not the case when the campaigns are pursued by countries that say they do not wish to see a maimed child, but do cause death and suffering through hunger for millions of children for other reasons such as economic blockades that do not differentiate between the various sectors of the population and prevent lives from being saved, including children's lives, because of the lack of a pacemaker or basic medication to alleviate suffering from cancer. We are making these few brief references to illustrate the fact that we are not convinced by all the organizers of campaigns regarding their motives, and we will never stop demanding that this Conference deal with nuclear disarmament. We are convinced that we are right and consequently we will continue to uphold our position. We hope we will continue to enjoy the help of those organizations which, like the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, urge us not to give up, and at the same time we call on public opinion and the press to follow developments in this forum and not to allow the Conference on Disarmament to become a forum for non-proliferation or disarmament for the poor.

Let us ban the use of anti-personnel landmines for attacking other countries, let us strengthen the bans on their indiscriminate and irresponsible use, but let us not ignore the right of States, recognized in the United Nations Charter, to self-defence and the defence of their sovereignty and territorial integrity. Some countries might find that mines are no longer useful and therefore they wish to ban them. However, the situation varies in different countries and regions, and this has to be borne in mind. Nuclear weapons, as has been shown, are of no military use, and yet certain countries that possess them refuse point-blank to abandon them and are not even prepared to enter into any commitment to that end.

We hope, Madam President, that you will begin urgent consultations on the establishment of a programme of work and the requisite arrangements to enable this Conference to address matters of priority for the international community. The delegation of Cuba will spare no effort to ensure that this is achieved satisfactorily.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Cuba for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I have no more speakers on the list for today. Would any other delegations like to take the floor at this stage? I give the floor to the representative of Canada, Ambassador Moher.

Mr. MOHER (Canada): Madam President, since we did not warn you and others that we were going to speak today, I shall try to be as succinct as possible. First of all, it is a pleasure to see you in the presidency and, as usual, Canada will try to be part of the solution to the CD problems, not part of the generation of those problems. I would like to obviously take advantage of this occasion to pay tribute to those of our colleagues who are leaving, whose company and professional cooperation we have enjoyed over the last two years that we have been here, and we wish them all the best obviously for the future. I should also like to express Canada's enthusiastic appreciation of the message delivered here this morning by Ambassador Lafer of Brazil.

With regard to CD work, Canada's views, I think, have been expressed here on several occasions, in January and again at the beginning of May, where we indicated that we think there are a number of elements upon which the CD could and should work, and we hope that a way will be found in the reasonably near future for us to actually get under way with regard to those elements.

But I would like to add just a couple of words on the anti-personnel landmine question. Canada has respected fully, we think, the views of countries with regard to this question, which we admit is a terribly complex and difficult one, and certainly the contribution by Ambassador Sha here this morning was very welcome, and there was much in what he said with which I agree. I certainly feel he can take all the time of this body he wishes to make his views known. And I do not propose to enter into any kind of debate. I just want to make four or five very quick observations. Firstly, Canada has not tried at any point to press the Canadian objective in the CD. That is because we have respected the variety of views in this room and the strongly held national opinions. Secondly, we have not at any point sought the endorsement by the CD of the Ottawa Process, for exactly the same reason. We have acknowledged fully the need for a multidimensional response or action plan to deal with the landmine problem. We share all of the views that Ambassador Sha expressed with regard to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and the additional Protocol dealing with landmines. We agree demining is essential. We agree humanitarian assistance to victims is essential. We have also not objected at any time to the CD doing what it thinks it should and can do with regard to anti-personnel landmines. We have not objected to the idea of a special coordinator. We have no difficulty with the CD agreeing to a mandate which is a straightforward expression of what the CD wishes to do on anti-personnel landmines. So I think those various qualities have characterized Canada's approach to this question in the CD. But I think it is also essential that I make it absolutely clear that Canada's national objective - a ban, a comprehensive ban, on APLs - is one to which we attach very fundamental importance. We are going to pursue it as vigorously as we can. We think the value and validity of that objective stands up to any objective examination. We will work to achieve that objective in cooperation

(Mr. Moher, Canada)

with all of those who feel in good faith that they share our views on that issue. This does not mean that we at any point tried to assess, evaluate, judge, condemn, whatever, the views of other countries. Brussels and Oslo are going to be significant steps forward to the signature in December of 1997, by as many States as possible, of a comprehensive ban agreement in Ottawa.

We continue to see the Ottawa Process as an extremely important, indeed essential and central element of a multidimensional approach to dealing with the terrible problem posed by anti-personnel landmines. We hope that the CD will be able to agree to its contribution to that multidimensional approach, but we would hope it can do so without entering into value judgments as regards other exercises.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Canada for his statement. Would any other delegations like to take the floor? None would.

As I announced at the beginning of the present plenary session, I now invite the Conference to express its view on the draft decision concerning the appointment of a special coordinator on anti-personnel landmines, as contained in document CD/1465, it being understood that the adoption of this draft decision will open the way to the adoption of a programme of work of the Conference as soon as possible, and I promise that I will spare no effort to that end. May I take it that the Conference adopts the draft decision?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I give the floor to the representative of Egypt, Ambassador Zahran.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): Madam President, now that we have adopted the draft decision presented in document CD/1465, I would like first of all to greet you as President of the Conference and thank you for the efforts that you have exerted and for the consultations that you have initiated from the outset in an attempt to reach consensus on this subject. At the same time, I would like to express my gratitude and esteem to the Ambassadors and colleagues who will soon be leaving us, namely Ambassador Kurokochi of Japan, Ambassador Dembinski of Poland and Ambassador Berguño of Chile. I wish to salute their efforts and their contributions, both in person and on behalf of the respective countries, to the work of the Conference. I also pay tribute to the statements they made while bidding us farewell after a period of intensive work in the Conference on Disarmament.

I would also like to endorse what those Ambassadors said concerning the need to improve the methods of work of the CD. From the beginning of the work of the Conference, the delegation of Egypt has stressed the need to appoint a special coordinator to finalize our joint efforts to improve the methods of work of the Conference and achieve progress in this respect in order to overcome the difficulties which we have faced since the beginning of the work of the Conference in view of the fact that there are some shortcomings and an

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

urgent need to review the rules of procedure in a manner consistent with the changing circumstances following the Conference's commendable efforts to benefit mankind by concluding a number of conventions in the negotiation of which I had the honour to personally take part, namely, the Convention banning chemical weapons and the CTBT convention which we negotiated and agreed together.

Now that we have adopted the decision concerning anti-personnel landmines which was presented by the delegation of Australia in document CD/1465, I am sorry to note that we adopted it without adopting a programme of work for the Conference. On behalf of the delegation of Egypt, in a number of statements that I made in the plenary meetings of the Conference and also during the negotiations and the informal Presidential consultations and in the Group of 21, I repeatedly said that, although I had no objection whatsoever, we could not choose one of the many topics submitted for discussion at the Conference on Disarmament, namely anti-personnel landmines, without first agreeing on a comprehensive programme of work for the Conference that would reflect the priorities of the international community. I would like to re-emphasize that, in our view, the issue of nuclear disarmament should be accorded the priority agreed by the international community, and the sole negotiating forum in this respect is the CD. We agreed on this in the decision on the "Principles and objectives" which was adopted at the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference in 1995. We mentioned that the priority topics included the question of nuclear disarmament and that the only forum in which this topic could be dealt with in a multilateral framework was the Conference on Disarmament.

Nevertheless, as I said before, the nuclear Powers are able, and have the right, to negotiate a reduction in nuclear armaments outside the framework of the Conference and they can inform us of the steps that they have taken in this respect so that we can take them into account in our negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

On behalf of the delegation of Egypt, I would like to express regret that we have not as yet been able to adopt a programme of work for the CD in accordance with the rules of procedure, that we have chosen a single topic which, although important, does not enjoy the top priority accorded to nuclear disarmament, and that we have chosen to start the work of the CD by dealing with this issue. Although we will be cooperating with the Special Coordinator on this subject, it should be borne in mind that the outcome of the work of the Special Coordinator will be fruitless unless we agree on a work programme for the CD. Our approval is therefore conditional on the adoption of a comprehensive programme of work for the CD. The delegation of Egypt has proposed, and the Group of 21 has adopted, a programme of work for the CD and we stand ready to negotiate thereon in order to establish a programme which is acceptable to all. In our opinion, the questions of nuclear disarmament, the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament and security guarantees for non-nuclear States should be accorded priority. Outer space and other topics are issues on which special coordinators could be appointed. I wish to re-emphasize the need to improve the methods of work of the CD. I

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

would like to suggest that, in my opinion, it is necessary to agree on the appointment of a special coordinator on this subject so that we can start immediately to consider and determine how best to ensure an improvement in the methods of work of the CD.

Now that we have agreed on the appointment of a special coordinator, it is very important that we should decide who is to undertake that task. In this connection, I would like to endorse what was said by the Ambassador of China in his statement concerning anti-personnel landmines. Our main concern is that the Special Coordinator should take into account the need to eliminate old and abandoned mines, particularly the landmines which were planted by countries during their occupation of the territories of others, and here I would like to refer to the case of Egypt in particular and to the landmines which were planted and abandoned in the territory of Egypt by foreign countries during the Second World War and the wars which took place in the Middle East. We have to give top priority to this because the ban on future production will not eliminate the danger to mankind, including the hazards to which individuals and development endeavours are exposed in Egypt and in similar cases elsewhere. In Egypt, we have about 23 million old abandoned mines. Therefore, we have to give top priority to this subject. Secondly, there is the question of defence obligations and the right of joint defence of the extensive borders which pass through uninhabited areas. It is inconceivable that we should disregard the security concerns of countries and their legitimate right of self-defence. Therefore, in our opinion these two topics should be accorded priority. I wish to stress this here and now before the Special Coordinator begins his work in this regard.

Finally, on behalf of the delegation of Egypt, I wish to endorse the statement made by Ambassador Celso Lafer of Brazil in which he expressed his country's intention to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. This is a very important step not only towards non-proliferation but also towards global nuclear disarmament. We hope to be able to ensure the universality of this treaty in order to finally eliminate nuclear weapons from the face of the earth and ensure full and honest implementation in good faith, as soon as possible, of article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Egypt for his statement. Mr. Ambassador, I would like to assure you that I listened to you with the greatest attention. I wish to stress once again that I will spare no effort to be able to adopt the programme of work. I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Mr. BUCH (Norway): Madam President, since this is the first time Norway takes the floor under your presidency, let me, like others, congratulate you upon your assumption of this important task. We are looking forward to constructive cooperation under your presidency.

Please allow me to make a few comments regarding the Norwegian position with respect to the appointment of a special coordinator on APLs. Our willingness to accept the appointment of a special coordinator, as stated in CD/1465, is based on the following understanding. The consultations

(Mr. Buch, Norway)

undertaken by the Special Coordinator shall be an open and initial process where the purpose is to get the views of the member States on the question of dealing with APLs in the CD, including what kind of mandate and organizational arrangements could be possible. An agreement to appoint a special coordinator is only an agreement to further explore how APLs might be treated in the CD, without any prejudice to the final outcome. Finally, a firm decision on how or whether the APL issue will be dealt with in the CD will be taken in accordance with the CD's rules of procedure.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Norway for his statement. On my list of speakers I have the representatives of India, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Cuba and Mexico. I now give the floor to the representative of India, Ambassador Ghose.

Ms. GHOSE (India): Madam President, since this is the first time I take the floor under your presidency, may I assure you of the cooperation of my delegation in your efforts to get the CD working? I would also like to add my voice to those speakers who have bid farewell to our four parting colleagues and friends. We shall miss them. I must say that in a sense, perhaps, I even envy them the fact that they are going to places which are perhaps on paths slightly easier to tread.

The reason I take the floor today, after the adoption of the decision to appoint a Special Coordinator on landmines, is not to discuss that decision. As we have stated earlier, we have no problem with the decision as it stood, even when it was first proposed by a predecessor of yours. But the reason I take the floor is to draw attention to the chapeau of document CD/1465. The chapeau of CD/1465 talks about "urgent ongoing efforts.to establish a programme of work for its 1997 session". We are not aware of any urgent ongoing efforts on the programme of work. We are aware, of course, that there are at least four proposals for a programme of work, from the beginning of this year. There was an Iranian proposal. There was a Canadian proposal. There has been a proposal by the G-21, and I believe, informally, one of your predecessors also tried to work on the programme of work. Of course, we have your assurance that this will be attended to, presumably inter-sessionally in between ECOSOC and the Biological Weapons Convention negotiations, and come out with a consensus when we start our work at the end of July.

However, let me try and say what really bothers me. What bothers me is some of the comments which have been made this morning. I would like to make very clear what our stand is on the issue of consensus in the CD. In our view, consensus in the CD is there to protect the weak, not to ignore the weak. Unfortunately, we seem to find that there are occasions where consensus, when it does not suit a majority - and the use of the word "majority" already brings in the idea that this is a voting procedure, a hidden voting procedure - when a country, even if it is one single country, has a particular problem, that problem needs to be addressed and respected. I do not think any country which holds matters up - even on a procedural issue or one which may seem procedural to some of us - takes that action lightly.

(Ms. Ghose, India)

That country does it in its national interest, and we need, as a group of responsible States, to address what those problems are. I am deeply troubled by this particular trend in the CD and what it augurs for the future of our work.

We are getting used, as a member of the G-21, to being ignored. We put our priorities forward, and they are dismissed as rhetoric. We tried this, and this is not new. On 14 March last year we had called for an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. We had called for an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in 1994, and we have been asking for it ever since, and it is a priority issue. Yes, we respect that there are countries which have problems. We would like to address those problems. If we get a straight "no", there is no way we can even address those problems. But there is something to the point of view which a large number of countries have put forward. We tabled in this session our proposal for a programme of work in document CD/1462. I am not aware of a single comment, except in passing, on one or two of the issues. Of course, as I said, we have your assurance that you will consult with us on the programme of work. We also have, and I am glad to draw particular attention to, document CD/1463, where we, India, together with several other countries of the G-21, have put forward a proposal for a mandate for an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. None of these is thought to be important enough. It is true, we are not terribly important. We are the smaller, weaker countries. But for as long as we participate in the CD, we expect to participate as equals. We expect that our priorities will be given consideration and a response, and I think that the reason I take the floor today is that we do not believe that the appointment of a Special Coordinator on landmines has by any means solved any of the problems which genuinely exist. We heard an extremely good statement this morning by Ambassador Sha of China. We heard very good statements earlier on the same issue. This seems to be for the record. They are not taken on board. Maybe a Special Coordinator will solve it, maybe. We have no problem with a Special Coordinator or whatever is being done. But if we are going to be serious, I really feel that if we, as a country, are to continue to be involved in, to be interested in, what happens in the CD, then our priorities and our interests also need to be addressed. They cannot just be wished away, and we cannot just be told that only what "we think is right for you" will be negotiated here, whatever is ready for negotiation. I think that the reason I take the floor is because I am troubled, it is because I am very concerned. I am very concerned that one of our members had to absent himself today in order to see that the CD can take a decision. I hope that this is not a precedent and that one day I will not be called upon also, by circumstance, to absent myself to enable the CD to take a decision. I do not think this is the way in which peace and security are best guarded, unless you have the voluntary agreement of all countries participating in the CD to a particular decision of the CD. Such a decision, in my view, has very little value.

Mr. ARMSTRONG (New Zealand): Since I have already spoken today, I shall be brief. New Zealand was pleased to be able to join in adopting the decision to appoint a special coordinator to conduct consultations on a possible mandate on the question of APLs under agenda item 6. This decision, in our view, will allow for a much fuller exploration of all countries' positions than has been possible to date. We look forward to participating in the consultations of the Special Coordinator when appointed. Our commitment to achieving, as soon as possible, a total ban on landmines is reflected in our full engagement in the Ottawa Process. We accept that there is a potential for the CD to contribute to this urgent goal. We would also be pleased to see negotiations in the CD proceed in parallel with the Ottawa Process, provided there is a political willingness here to reach an early agreement on a strong mandate supportive of an early and comprehensive outcome. The step we have taken today will provide the means to find out whether or not there is such a political will in this body. We look forward to the Special Coordinator's early report, which should focus on the question of whether or not the Conference on Disarmament is able to reach consensus on a negotiating mandate supportive of an early and comprehensive outcome banning landmines. In the absence of such a consensus, New Zealand would not regard the Conference as being seized of the issue of landmines.

Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka): Madam President, you deserve the thanks and congratulations of the Conference on Disarmament for bringing the discussion on landmines to a conclusion today with the adoption of the decision contained in document CD/1465. In a statement made by my delegation some months ago in this forum, Sri Lanka clearly stated that it did not consider that landmines was a priority item for the CD. However, we said we had no objections to this issue's being taken up by the Conference. So far as the decision in CD/1465 is concerned, the understanding of my delegation is that the Special Coordinator will seek the views of members on the question of anti-personnel landmines under agenda item 6.

Now, with regard to the chapeau of this proposal - I think the reference was made by the distinguished Ambassador of India - particularly in relation to "urgent ongoing efforts", I would like to address this particular aspect. There is reference in this chapeau to "urgent ongoing efforts", and to the need "to set up mechanisms" and I hope that in the time available to us you will be able to resolve this matter as well. In this regard, I would like to mention the proposals contained in document CD/1462. In that proposal, the Group of 21 referred to several areas. First, there were proposals to establish three ad hoc committees: on nuclear disarmament, on outer space and on negative security assurances. There were also three other proposals with regard to the appointment of special coordinators on landmines, TIA and expansion of membership. Happily, the issue of landmines is now behind us, and we have several other issues to be considered. I consider that the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Germany is important in that he made a reference to the ability of the Western Group - I believe this sentiment is shared by the majority of us - and I will quote: he said, "ad hoc committees could be set up immediately" - I repeat the word "immediately" - "on negative security assurances, outer space and transparency in armaments". He was referring to at least three different areas. Now,

(Mr. Goonetilleke, Sri Lanka)

taking this readiness on the part of some delegations to establish certain ad hoc committees immediately, perhaps before this formal session comes to an end, you could ask the Conference whether - I will use that particular order that was referred to in the statement of the Ambassador of Germany - whether the CD is in a position to set up ad hoc committees immediately on negative security assurances, on outer space and transparency in armaments. Then I come down to other proposals which are not included in that statement but referred to in the proposal of the Group of 21 on nuclear disarmament. We have another proposal for the appointment of the special coordinator on expansion. You may wish to ask the Conference whether there is any objection to establishing these ad hoc committees and appointing these special coordinators, and if there is not agreement to, for example, establish one ad hoc committee on NSA or outer space. We can take a quick decision. If there is disagreement on the subject of TIA or nuclear disarmament, we can postpone that decision for further consultations at an informal meeting, and I am certain that nobody would be opposed to the appointment of a special coordinator on expansion as well. By doing this, we will be in a position to separate the items on which we can take a quick decision at this meeting itself, and defer decisions on other issues to an informal meeting during which we can have a discussion and reach an agreement as to how we will tackle those problems. By electing this type of a procedure, I believe the CD will at least be able to solve the issues relating to the programme of work, in part, during the second part of the 1997 session.

Mr. AMAT FORES (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): We have a similar concern and the same feeling of dissatisfaction as that expressed by the distinguished Ambassador of India, and for the same reasons which she put forward. We have adopted this decision to appoint a special coordinator on mines, but my delegation considers that we must immediately address and reach agreement on a programme of work. The decision adopted is selective and stands apart from the priority objectives of the Conference on Disarmament. There are proposals as to how our work should continue and my delegation, with the greatest respect, considers that you must urgently begin consultations on that subject, Madam, it being understood, as you yourself indicated, that we have accepted this decision, and I wish this to be noted in the records of this meeting.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): It was my intention to make a brief statement, but the representatives of Norway and New Zealand anticipated me. In fact I have little to add to what they said. The decision that we adopted today to appoint a special coordinator on mines to hold consultations on a possible mandate does not mean for my delegation that the Conference has decided to negotiate on the topic of mines.

I feel a certain sadness today at the departure of such eminent and such able friends. I listened very carefully to what was said by the Ambassadors who are leaving us, and the least I can do is to make it clear to them how much we shall miss them. They have left us messages which deserve study and deep reflection. I would not like the words which follow to be interpreted as a frivolous attempt to react on the run to reflections which they had spent time formulating, but I would like to stress that both Ambassador Kurokochi

(Mr. de Icaza, Mexico)

and Ambassador Berguño raised very interesting points concerning the rules of procedure. I agree with Ambassador Kurokochi, that vetoes should not be exercised on questions of procedure. If I recall correctly, it was in 1982 that the Group of 21 made a specific proposal for amendment of the rules of procedure for precisely this purpose, so that there would be no need for consensus for questions of procedure. I would like the secretariat to reissue for information that proposal put forward by the Group of 21 in 1982. If the Group of 21 had been heeded, we would not be having the problems we have had this year. At the beginning of the year we would have established an ad hoc committee for nuclear disarmament, which, as we all know is the priority for the international community, and of course our priority. So that we cannot but fully agree with the remarks made by Ambassador Kurokochi and Ambassador Berguño. I was very struck by the first part of the statement made by our distinguished friend, Ambassador Dembinski, who gave what I thought was a very meticulous and well thought-out diagnosis of our difficulties, the reasons why we are operating as we are, which call for serious consideration. As to the conclusions, my distinguished friend knows of course that we do not share the same ideas. We believe that despite the change in the backdrop, and despite the very positive change in international relations, there are priorities that last. One of these is to rid ourselves of weapons that jeopardize the future of the human race.

Of course Ambassador Sha, with his customary skill, gave us a lesson on anti-personnel landmines and I agree with practically everything he said. There is one thing I do not agree with. Ambassador Sha said repeatedly that anti-personnel landmines are a purely defensive weapon. No, Madam, anti-personnel landmines, like any mines, are a principally defensive weapon, but today they are not defensive weapons in the way that they are used. They are used in their millions, dropped from the air, launched with artillery for purposes of harassment and interdiction. This is a weapon which has become a weapon of terror, aimed at civilians, and it is used massively in order to attack. This is not a new phenomenon. As early as 1976, at the Conference of Experts convened by the International Committee of the Red Cross in Lugano, when the first proposals were made to prohibit or limit the use of mines in general, not only anti-personnel landmines, there was a French/English/Dutch document on the prohibition of certain uses, when the use of anti-personnel mines was permitted in populated areas, in towns. When we asked why, we were told it was for the very purposes of harassment and interdiction. It was a military necessity. When it was pointed out to them that the use of that weapon in cities would run counter to the rules of international humanitarian law on attacks, they replied that this was not an attack because these were defensive weapons. When we asked them how, with a defensive weapon, you can harass and interdict, we did not get any answer. That was in 1976 before any helicopter had the ability to drop 15,000 anti-personnel landmines during one flight. Such a quantity of mines dropped in one go constitutes not a defensive weapon, but an offensive weapon. But I agree with Ambassador Sha - we have to eliminate for humanitarian reasons the use of anti-personnel landmines that have indiscriminate effects. We must secure a total ban, and in this regard allow me to read out to you the report I just received this morning from my Counsellor Gómez Robledo, who is in Brussels. He says: "Mr. Ambassador, I have pleasure in informing you that participation in

(Mr. de Icaza, Mexico)

Brussels has exceeded the most optimistic expectations: 161 States are represented, only 30 as observers; 131 States will sign the declaration that commits them to the abolition of mines this year. More than 1,000 non-governmental organizations are also attending." My Government is represented in Brussels.

Lastly, with regard to the decision we have adopted today, we also understand that we have adopted it to facilitate efforts which, as the representative of India states, should be under way with regard to the priorities in a programme of work. We should - and we thank you for your assurances, Madam - draw up a programme of work that will clearly reflect the priorities of the international community.

Ms. CRITTENBERGER (United States of America): May I add my voice to those of others in bidding a respectful *adieu* to our distinguished colleagues on taking leave of our Conference and thank them for their words of wisdom, which we will study and perhaps draw much advice from in the days to come? As noted by our distinguished Brazilian colleague, Ambassador Lafer, the United States has already welcomed Brazil's step to submit the NPT for ratification.

The main reason I have asked for the floor at this point in our meeting is to address the decision we have just taken on document CD/1465. My delegation and my Government welcome the decision taken today to appoint a special coordinator to conduct consultations on a possible mandate on the question of anti-personnel landmines under agenda item 6, and in taking this decision, it is the view of my delegation that the CD has taken an important step towards elaborating upon the contribution it should make in the worldwide efforts to stem the catastrophic consequences of anti-personnel landmines for civilian populations. We look forward to the immediate appointment of an individual to fulfil this function and the early report enabling another CD decision, hopefully in the near future, to establish an ad hoc committee to pursue appropriate negotiations on anti-personnel landmines in the Conference on Disarmament.

The United States' views on anti-personnel landmines and the CD role were set out in both Acting Director Holum's speech on 15 May and by myself at the Tuesday plenary, and I will not repeat them at this point in time. There is, however, the hope of my delegation that a broad framework for anti-personnel landmine negotiations in the CD can be agreed, providing for a flexible and comprehensive approach. In my view, the proposal contained in document CD/1455, proposed by the Japanese and Hungarian delegations, could offer such a framework.

In concluding my remarks this morning, I would like to note that my delegation has listened carefully to the comments of the distinguished representatives who have spoken before me. We also, with respect to the chapeau of CD/1465, hope that the decision we have taken this morning will just be the first of a series of decisions that will enable us to get down to serious and productive work as soon as possible, and we look forward to working with you and others in the Conference to be in a situation to take such decisions.

Mr. TAUWHARE (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Madam President, may I join others in expressing our congratulations to you for assuming the important position of presidency and assure you of our full support for your efforts? Could I also add my appreciation to previous speakers for the efforts of your predecessors which have contributed to the step forward which the Conference has succeeded in taking today?

I warmly welcome the decision just taken by the Conference to appoint a Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines. Several speakers today have called attention to the outstanding and urgent need to agree on the programme of work. We fully share those concerns, but we regard this decision to appoint a Special Coordinator as a means to help us achieve that end, rather than an end in itself. I believe that the chapeau of the decision itself makes this quite clear. This delegation remains fully committed to working in good faith to reach agreement on the programme of work, but as we have repeatedly made clear, we believe that such a programme should include negotiations on anti-personnel landmines. I know that there are some here who question whether the CD should discuss this issue. The United Kingdom, however, believes that it should and that the decision we have taken is therefore the right one and an important one. In my Ambassador's statement on 22 May, he made clear that the United Kingdom is committed to the aim of achieving a comprehensive ban on the transfer, manufacture, stockpiling and use of landmines, and that we will participate constructively in the Ottawa Process to this end. We regret that not all States, including several States represented here, have been able to make a similar commitment. It is specifically with the aim of drawing in these States, in the interests of securing a wider ban, that we support work on this issue in the CD. On the other hand, we regret that not all States who are ready to commit themselves to a total ban are ready to pursue work here. The crisis affecting mine-infested countries is continuing as we debate. Lives are being lost and livelihoods ruined. We have a responsibility to act whenever and wherever we can. We believe that work in the CD and in the Ottawa Process should be complementary and mutually reinforcing. For that reason, we welcome, as I say, the decision we have just taken. We want to see an ad hoc committee on anti-personnel landmines established urgently. With that objective in mind, we look forward to working constructively with the Special Coordinator and urge all other delegations to do likewise. The time remaining for the work of the Special Coordinator is regrettably short. We firmly hope, therefore, that he can be appointed today to enable him to begin consultations during the inter-sessional period and to present the Conference with an early report in August. I would therefore recommend that you adjourn this session, that you hold immediately informal consultations on the nomination of a suitable candidate, and reconvene, if possible this afternoon, to decide on his appointment.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for his statement. I have four more speakers on my list. In view of the time I propose to suspend the plenary and then to hold Presidential consultations at 2.45 p.m. Then we shall hold an informal meeting, after which we will resume the plenary.

The meeting was suspended at 1 p.m. and resumed at 4.40 p.m.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The 770th plenary meeting is resumed. I shall first of all give the floor to those speakers who have been on my list since this morning. We will then take a decision on Georgia's request to participate in our work as an observer. Then we will take a decision on the candidature for the post of Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines. Lastly, we will consider the proposal made this morning by the representative of Sri Lanka on the Conference's programme of work. The first speaker on my list is the representative of Finland, Ambassador Reimaa.

Mr. REIMAA (Finland): I would like to express the satisfaction of my delegation at the positive decision which we have just taken to appoint a special coordinator to conduct consultations on a possible mandate on the question of anti-personnel landmines under agenda item 6. At the same time, I would like to congratulate you, Madam, for this important achievement at the beginning of your presidency of the Conference. I am sure it augurs well for your further efforts to serve our common cause.

Finland has, with many other countries, tried to work actively in order to see to it that this Conference could play its legitimate role in dealing with this challenging issue and starting a consultative negotiating process on a total ban of anti-personnel landmines. We consider today's decision most timely. We are convinced that all delegations will now be ready to make constructive contributions in assisting the Coordinator to prepare the report to the Conference, and we would naturally be very happy to be in a position to congratulate the Coordinator in person, as soon as possible.

In this context, I am very pleased that our esteemed colleagues, Ambassadors Kurokochi, Dembinski, Berguño and Armstrong, with whom I have had the privilege of working closely, had the chance to witness this concrete result before they leave Geneva. Their contributions, also today, have been most welcome, and I am convinced that they will be assisting us in our future deliberations.

I listened with particular interest to the statement made by our Chinese colleague, Ambassador Sha. We appreciate the clearly announced readiness of his delegation to join others in exploring this issue in the CD. We hope that the decision taken today, as many delegations have already said before me, will pave the way for further constructive decisions so that the potential of the Conference can be more effectively realized.

Mr. BERGUÑO (Chile) (translated from Spanish): I wish to associate myself with the terms of the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Finland, that is to say, to welcome the fact that a positive decision has been taken and that at least this is one decision along the path to implementing the programme of work, in other words in the application of the agenda of our Conference. Also to say we hope that the Coordinator will not only be appointed but will start his or her work as promptly as possible, and to support the proposal made by the Ambassador of Sri Lanka so that we can make progress on the specific items on which there is consensus, and those which he identified are fully endorsed by my delegation. My delegation, as you know,

(Mr. Berguño, Chile)

Madam, is a party to the Group of 21 document. That paper identifies a set of tasks which we call the programme of work. These tasks are the ways in which the various items should be approached and we are prepared, open-minded, not as the Group of 21 but as the delegation of Chile, to examine each of these points promptly with the intention, or the illusion, that a decision can be adopted in this regard at this very plenary meeting.

Mr. KREID (Austria): I am particularly pleased that it was under your chairmanship, Madam, that we were able to move forward in our deliberations. It remains to be seen how decisive this move is, but we wish you luck and pledge our support. Some of the colleagues who have announced that they are leaving us have, in their final remarks, given us sound and poignant advice and I think, as far as we are concerned, that we consider this an important legacy to be examined and evaluated for our future work.

We do not want the CD to be occupied with one single subject only, and we are among those delegations here in the room who would hope and who would support that we expand our programme of work, that we agree on the nomination of special coordinators or the setting up of ad hoc committees along the lines of declarations and of proposals which have already been made.

As far as our position of this morning to have a coordinator on anti-personnel landmines is concerned, I would want to say the following: our delegation is ready to embark, together with the other member countries here, on a process of identifying what contribution to the cause, which is a common, shared global cause, the CD can usefully make, without however endangering the process known under the name of Ottawa. While we fully appreciate the statement made earlier by Ambassador Sha, and while we share much of what he has said, we fail to see how the Ottawa Process could have a negative impact on what he calls the authority of the CD as a negotiating body, since the Ottawa Process, in our mind, owes its very existence to the fact that the CD has failed to exercise authority in a timely manner in this area. I believe that what the Chinese remarks suggest to us is simply that there are certain limitations here in the CD, and these limitations will now have to be considered very carefully in discussing a possible mandate for negotiations.

Mr. AFZAL (Pakistan): As this is the first occasion for my delegation to take the floor under your presidency, Madam, I would like to take the opportunity to express our happiness in seeing you preside over the work of the Conference on Disarmament at this important juncture. I also wish to express our great appreciation for the diligent efforts made by your predecessors, particularly Ambassador Berdennikov of the Russian Federation and Ambassador Diallo of Senegal. These efforts and the energetic endeavours you have made over the past few days have resulted in the welcome decision taken by the Conference this morning to appoint a special coordinator on the issue of anti-personnel landmines. We look forward to the designation of the Special Coordinator, and we will work closely with him towards agreement on the direction and the substance of work that the CD can undertake on the APL issue.

(Mr. Afzal, Pakistan)

Pakistan indeed was the first to propose, in the Conference on 30 January this year, that the appointment of a special coordinator was the most appropriate way in which we could conduct the consultations on this issue. Ambassador Sha of the People's Republic of China has very eloquently expressed his views on various aspects of the issues involved in APLs. We appreciate his statement, which places in front of us a lot of substance to talk about. We, on our part, share views expressed by him and we are looking forward to discussing them during consultations with the Special Coordinator.

At this time, we consider it necessary to reiterate that the Conference must continue to award the highest priority to the creation of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, as proposed by the Group of 21 on several occasions. The draft mandate for an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament has been proposed by 26 delegations of the Group of 21 in document CD/1463. I trust that you will soon convene consultations to consider the establishment of the ad hoc committee on this subject and its draft mandate. The Group of 21 has also proposed in document CD/1462, dated 5 June of this year, that two other ad hoc committees should also be established on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Since mandates for these proposed committees are already available and agreed previously by the Conference, we hope that their establishment will take place very soon and will not be linked with other issues. Pakistan also suggests consideration of the proposal of the Group of 21 for the appointment of a special coordinator on transparency in armaments, as well as special coordinators on the questions of the expansion of the CD and the improved and effective functioning of the CD.

Pakistan shares the sense of frustration of many members of the Group of 21 that so far there has not been a constructive response to the Group's proposals on a programme of work, contained in document CD/1462. My delegation believes that since there is no substantive objection to almost all the proposals that have been put forward in this document, you will find it possible to convene early consultations on these proposals, with a view to adopting appropriate decisions at the outset of the CD's resumed session next month.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Pakistan for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of France, Mr. Rivasseau.

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): The French delegation extends to you its best wishes for success, Madam President. We are particularly pleased to see in the Chair the representative of Slovakia, a friendly country with which we have close ties. We are particularly pleased also, and this is quite a rare event, to see two French-speaking Presidents following one after the other in the Chair.

(Mr. Rivasseau, France)

France was the first country here this year to propose the establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate on the subject of anti-personnel landmines. Today's decision is a step in that direction; we are waiting for the next steps.

France is taking part actively in all international efforts which can lead to a total ban on anti-personnel mines worldwide, and as far as we are concerned a total ban relates to the production, use, stockpiling and export of anti-personnel mines. To this end we confirmed yesterday in the Brussels Conference that we would take part in the conference which will open in Oslo in September in order to conclude if possible, before the end of the year in Ottawa, a Convention prohibiting the production, use, stockpiling and export of anti-personnel landmines. In parallel we will continue to work as hard as we possibly can for the opening of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, in order to identify solutions which are genuinely verifiable and universal. The Conference on Disarmament is the appropriate forum to embark on negotiations including the States which produce and use anti-personnel mines and which may be expected not to be able to join in the negotiations in Oslo and later the Ottawa convention itself. Finally, France, jointly with its European Union partners, inter alia, calls on all States to ratify as of now Protocol II to the 1980 Convention, which regulates the use of anti-personnel mines, as amended in May 1996. This text is the sole international legal instrument which currently limits the use, and in particular what is called the indiscriminate use, of this type of weapon. It is therefore very important that it should be implemented by as many States as possible pending the adoption of stricter instruments, and pending accession to the latter by the countries most concerned.

On the national level, France has renounced the production and export of anti-personnel mines once and for all, it has embarked on the destruction of its stockpiles, and we hope that these measures will have made a modest contribution to mobilizing the international community as regards the use of anti-personnel mines. France is ready to renounce them totally as soon as an effective treaty enters into force, and at the very latest at the end of 1999. In the interim, France will continue to apply the rule laid down by the Council of Ministers on 2 October 1996 renouncing use except in cases of absolute necessity relating to force security.

Yesterday the Senate adopted an act ratifying Protocol II to the 1980 Convention. The text will be submitted to the National Assembly in the near future. Ratification of Protocol II is therefore under way as far as we are concerned, and the Minister for European Affairs, who submitted the bill for ratification in the upper chamber, took the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment, both within the Conference on Disarmament and in what is now called the Ottawa Process, in favour of the greatest support for Protocol II to the 1980 Convention.

Madam President, having addressed the question of mines, my delegation would like to assure you of its full support for the urgent efforts which are now incumbent on you in order to breathe life into the chapeau of the decision we have adopted today, and for the efforts on which you are currently

(Mr. Rivasseau, France)

embarking to ensure that the Conference draws up a programme of work for this session and sets up appropriate machinery for the other items on the agenda of the Conference. We are ready to discuss the proposals on the table, and particularly the proposal put forward this very morning by Sri Lanka. We may need to continue this discussion beyond this evening, but we wish to embark on it seriously and to reiterate our full support for your efforts on this matter.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of France for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I have no further speakers on my list. Do other delegations wish to take the floor at this juncture? I recognize the representative of China. You have the floor.

Mr. SHA (China) (translated from Chinese): During this morning's plenary the Chinese delegation made a statement on the subject of APLs. With regard to that statement some expressed their support. Others expressed different views with regard to a certain part of that statement. As far as my delegation is concerned, that is nothing but normal, because in the very first paragraph of my delegation's statement we made it very clear that there are different views on the APL issue. In the last paragraph of my statement I once again mentioned that on the issue of APLs there are different views. Therefore it can be said that the Chinese delegation is by no means surprised by the comments we have heard. It is precisely because we have different views that there is a need to appoint a special coordinator to seek the views of all parties. It is precisely because there are differences between us that there is a need to conduct discussions, including the possible future negotiations. If at the very beginning the views are all convergent, then there will be no need for meetings any more. Therefore, with regard to the views expressed by others, my delegation has full understanding. At the same time, my delegation is gratified that some delegations have attached such great importance to the statement by my delegation.

The second point I would like to make is that the members of my delegation are by no means military experts, and I especially am not. Therefore, if I am asked to make a distinction as to whether the landmine is a defensive or an offensive weapon, it will be difficult for me to do so. I would have to rely on my experts. They are all Chinese. The Chinese experts may not see eye to eye with other experts. As a layman, however, I am aware that even the landmines that are used during attack are still defensive in nature. They do not change their characteristics of being defensive. Therefore we can leave this topic for future discussion. I would hope as a layman I could be convinced by others.

Another point I would like to make is on the Ottawa Process. We certainly respect the sovereign decisions of those States participating in the Ottawa Process. I wish them good luck. In my statement I only expressed doubt that the Ottawa Process might have an effect on the role of the CD as the single multilateral negotiating body in the disarmament area. I only raised that point. Of course, if there is no negative effect whatsoever, my delegation would then be able to say "Long live the CD". As to whether my statement represents only a personal value judgement, indeed that is the case.

(Mr. Sha, China)

It is the value judgement of my delegation. It is 100 per cent true. Therefore I have no interest whatsoever in imposing that value judgement on others. Finally, I would like to congratulate ourselves on the decision we took this morning. I hope that with regard to the difference that exists among us we will have the opportunity to conduct full discussions.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of China for his statement. Do other delegations wish to take the floor at this stage?

I now invite the Conference to take a decision on the request from Georgia to participate in the work of the Conference in 1997 as an observer. This request is before you under cover of a note from the President issued as document CD/WP.488. May I take it that the Conference approves this request?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The intensive consultations that I have conducted indicate that the candidature of Ambassador John Campbell of Australia is acceptable for the post of Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines. May I consider that the Conference decides to appoint Ambassador Campbell to that position?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I would like to extend my warm congratulations to Ambassador Campbell and wish him every success in his difficult task. I give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Ms. HAND (Australia): Allow me to offer the congratulations of the Australian delegation to you, Madam President, on your assumption of the presidency. I should like to thank the Conference for the responsibility it has entrusted to Ambassador Campbell. I know he will be surprised when I pass on the news to him. He is currently in Brussels, participating in good faith in that process. I know I can say on his behalf that he will take up the appointment with the gravity and bipartisan quality that the subject and your interest warrant. The delegation looks forward to working closely with each of you in the coming period.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Australia for her statement. You will recall that this morning the Ambassador of Sri Lanka proposed that the Conference should decide to set up ad hoc committees on certain items on the agenda. May I ask the representative to be kind enough to repeat his proposal?

Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka): It appears to my delegation that 26 June is a very good day because we have been able to take two important decisions, one on CD/1465 and the other to appoint Ambassador Campbell as the Special Coordinator. I hope that, if we proceed in the same spirit and at the same speed, we will be able to achieve much more before we close this second part of the 1997 session of the CD.

(Mr. Goonetilleke, Sri Lanka)

In my intervention this morning, I briefly made reference to the chapeau of the draft decision contained in CD/1465, and also to the proposals contained in CD/1462, proposed by the Group of 21, in which there were several proposals for the establishment of three ad hoc committees and a number of special coordinators. I also made reference to the very interesting statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Germany, who very clearly stated that ad hoc committees could be set up immediately on negative security assurances, outer space and transparency in armaments. This was the position of the Western Group, as stated in the plenary of last year's session. Now, that being the case - and some of these positions coincide with the proposals made by the members of the Group of 21 - I thought, taking into consideration the good mood we are in today, we will be able to go a little bit further and take additional decisions.

I do not want to start with the listing that is contained in the G-21 proposal (CD/1462), but rather with the list enumerated by the distinguished Ambassador of Germany, and according to that statement, the Western Group is able to support the establishment of ad hoc committees on negative security assurances, outer space, transparency in armaments. What I suggested was that we take that list in that particular order, and that you ask the Conference whether it is in a position to take a decision on the establishment of, first, an ad hoc committee on negative security assurances, secondly, an ad hoc committee on outer space, and thirdly, an ad noc committee on transparency in armaments. Then I went back to the proposal of the G-21. From the point of view of the G-21, it is the most important subject, because in our statement we said that the Group of 21 continued to attach the highest priority to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. In view of that, I put that particular proposal, an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, as the fourth proposal. Then, we also have before us several proposals for appointing special coordinators. We have already taken a decision on the Coordinator for landmines, but there are several other proposals. One is for expansion, one is for the agenda, and the other one is for the improved and effective functioning of the Conference. So, you can ask the Conference in this particular order whether the Conference is in a position to take decisions on the establishment of the four ad hoc committees and the appointment of three special coordinators. If there is agreement, we can quickly establish the ad hoc committees or decide on the appointment of special coordinators, and perhaps even consider informally, or in whatever form you would like, who should take these responsibilities, and, if there are certain mechanisms on which we cannot reach a decision at this point in time in the plenary, perhaps we can put those issues aside and take them up in an informal meeting of the plenary so that we can also have a decision on those mechanisms as well.

In making this proposal, I also take into consideration what the distinguished Ambassador of Austria said a little while ago - that we cannot simply be satisfied with appointing a special coordinator on landmines and say that we have done a good job. We cannot go to the General Assembly and say that this is all we did for the year, and we cannot come back in 1998 and start the debate all over again and reach no conclusion. So it is a good

(Mr. Goonetilleke, Sri Lanka)

thing, although we will not be in a position to do much work during the remaining period of the Conference, to go through this procedure. We will be able to establish the mechanisms and, to the extent possible, we can do some work. This is my proposal.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Sri Lanka for his proposal. We have all heard the proposal, and I would like to have your reactions. I give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): We have heard the request made by the Ambassador of Sri Lanka to put before the Conference on Disarmament for consideration the proposals that he himself put forward, in the order in which he put them forward. I think it has been clear in this Conference after discussions we have had in that regard that any delegation has the right to submit a proposal to the Conference, and has the right to expect the President to put it to the Conference for consideration. The Ambassador of Sri Lanka has requested that the establishment, and there are various proposals, first of all of an ad hoc committee for agenda item 3, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", should be put before the Conference for consideration. That would be the first thing to be put before the Conference. I request you, Madam, to put this first proposal before the Conference for its consideration, and if there is no objection, that it be so decided. Once that had been done, we would move on to the second proposal, and then the third, the fourth, and those that follow.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt): I will speak in English because the text which I have before me is in English, and to avoid any misunderstanding by the interpreters. The decision which we have taken this morning reads in the chapeau, "without prejudice to, and within the context of, its urgent ongoing efforts to establish a programme of work for its 1997 session and to set up mechanisms, as appropriate, for other agenda items of the Conference", etc., so I think, having taken that decision, and also having taken a second decision to appoint a special coordinator, Ambassador Campbell of Australia, I am happy to see Ambassador Campbell as the Special Coordinator on this subject. I congratulate him and his delegation, and I assure him and the delegation of Australia of my full cooperation.

Having in mind the intervention of the delegation of Egypt in the plenary this morning, I think the most urgent thing which we are facing now is the implementation of the chapeau which we have agreed, that this is an urgent matter. We have on the table the proposal on the programme of work submitted by the Group of 21, and we have other proposals. I think that this is the urgent task which you as President, Madam, are facing, because you have to conduct consultations on that. I also have in mind the additional proposal made by the Ambassador of Sri Lanka. We are not again going to pick and choose. We have a programme of work in full in the Group of 21 paper. We also have other proposals and we have to take the programme of work as a package, and then we agree on the items which we will adopt in the programme of work, item by item - an ad hoc committee, for instance, on nuclear disarmament, an hoc committee on agenda item 3 - prevention of an arms race in outer space - and then on NSA, etc., etc., and also the question of special

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

coordinators. I think that we have first of all to agree on a programme of work, and then after that, we establish the various ad hoc committees or appoint special coordinators to deal with the various issues. This is, I think, the way my delegation sees things, in conformity with the decision which we adopted a few hours ago on the appointment of a special coordinator to deal with the issue of APLs.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): I should like to apologize for taking the floor again today, but I promise to be brief. Firstly, I should like to welcome the adoption of the decision in CD/1465, as well as the agreement on a special coordinator. I should like to congratulate you, Madam, for having achieved the decision, as well as Ambassador Campbell, in whose abilities and work we have full trust. At the same time, I should like to underline the readiness of my delegation to follow up on the chapeau of document CD/1465 by identifying other issues on which the CD might engage on substantive work. I therefore feel that the initiative by the delegations of Sri Lanka and Egypt to take this up is justified. Where my delegation would differ, however, is on the need to adopt a package. I think we should now start to examine, item by item, to see where we can agree, and we would also propose that we include, on issues where we cannot agree immediately on setting up an ad hoc committee, to see whether we might have other special coordinators, such as on the effectiveness of our work, since a number of delegations have addressed this issue this morning. I would also recall that in my statement this morning, I pointed to the urgency of addressing the issue of fissile material cut-off negotiations. This issue could also be addressed, and my delegation is of course in your hands as to how we carry out these consultations. You might either contact delegations in informal consultations, or hold an open-ended consultation, but I think we have now come to the stage where we should engage in a broader consultation on how to carry our work forward in this Conference.

Mr. KREID (Austria): It seems to me that we now have two proposals. The first was explained to us by the Ambassador of Sri Lanka and I believe fully supported by the Ambassador of Mexico, namely, that we have a list of items and we are asked to go through it and to react to each of them as to whether the delegations here are ready to proceed with either the establishment of an ad hoc committee or the nomination of additional coordinators. Now I admit that this procedure certainly has some risks since it might turn out that the final result of this process will not be to everybody's complete satisfaction. However, the good, positive aspect is that we might end up with something in addition to what we have agreed this morning, and this, as we have stated earlier, in itself would be a step in the right direction. Needless to say, this list is not a complete list from our viewpoint. We would like to have added to it, as the German Ambassador indicated, the item of fissile material cut-off. However, I am now somewhat at a loss as to how to interpret the proposal or the statement made earlier by the Ambassador of Egypt, because he was really speaking about adopting a complete work programme and still, if I correctly understood it, after having done so, going through such a list item by item. I do not see how we can do both things at the same time. I would actually, in the interest of being able to get some work done, express my preference for the approach which was suggested by Sri Lanka and Mexico.

Mrs. ARIAS CASTAÑO (Colombia) (translated from Spanish): Since my delegation is taking the floor for the first time under your presidency, Madam, allow me to congratulate you on taking up this post and on the success you have achieved in such a short time. I also wish to commend the Ambassador of Senegal for the excellent job she did in the Chair.

Colombia is among the countries which presented the programme of work contained in document CD/1462. We think that this programme of work would be ideal if it were adopted in full. However, in the light of events which have occurred today, since we have agreed to the appointment of a special coordinator for anti-personnel mines under agenda item 6, my delegation considers that the proposal made by the representative of Sri Lanka is a concrete and valid proposal which should be considered by the Conference. Therefore my delegation requests you, Madam, to put the questions one by one, whether the Conference is in a position to agree to the establishment of an ad hoc committee, firstly on negative assurances, secondly, on the arms race in outer space, thirdly on transparency in armaments, fourthly, on nuclear disarmament, and whether it is ready to appoint special coordinators, first for expansion, second on the agenda, and third on the functioning of this Conference. Once we have the reply, if this body agrees and we have consensus, various ad hoc committees can be set up and various special coordinators can be appointed. If not, we would embark on informal consultations and you could tell us what the best way would be to make progress on these issues. I request you to put the question directly on each of the points.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt): I am prompted to ask for the floor in reaction to what the Ambassador of Austria said - that he is perplexed about the proposal which I made. My proposal is related to the implementation of the chapeau of the decision which we have taken today on the appointment of a special coordinator to deal with APLs. So we wanted to implement this chapeau. We have said "within the context of ... its urgent ongoing efforts to establish a programme of work for its 1997 session", so this is the first priority which we have to tackle. This is in line with the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament. I wanted to draw your attention to rules 28 and 29 of the Conference on Disarmament. Either we follow these rules or we throw them out. In rule 28 - I am going to read it - perhaps not everyone has the rules before him - "On the basis of its agenda, the Conference, at the beginning of its annual session, shall establish its programme of work, which will include a schedule of its activities for that session, taking also into account the recommendations, proposals and decisions referred to in rule 27", which relates to the agenda. We already provisionally adopted the agenda at the beginning of the session. And then, rule 29 says: "The provisional agenda and the programme of work shall be drawn up by the President of the Conference on Disarmament" - that is, you yourself, Madam - "with the assistance of the Secretary-General and presented to the Conference for consideration and adoption". This is why I think we have to establish a work programme according to the rules of procedure, and then we proceed according to rule 28, to establish the schedule of the activities of the Conference at that session. I have no misgivings about the proposal of the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, but I think the first thing which we have again today, not

yesterday, is to establish a work programme in line with rule 28 of the rules of procedure.

Mr. AMAT FORES (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): It is true that there are different proposals, and it is also the case that there is a specific request made by a delegation, and in keeping with the practice which we have been following until very recently in Conference, a delegation can make a proposal and request that a decision be taken immediately. The arguments I have now heard from some delegations are different from what I heard when we had to take a decision with regard to mines. The topics awaiting a decision have been on the table as proposals in one form or anther for a long time, and everyone is familiar with them. So, Madam, please ask who is opposed to the establishment of these arrangements, as requested by the distinguished delegation of Sri Lanka. That is what we wished to say.

Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka): I do not want to prolong this debate any further. I believe all members would agree with me that to prepare a package we should have items to put into the package. Once we agree on items X, Y and Z, taking into consideration the proposals before us, we will soon be able to package it and to do that, first we will have to see on which issues we have agreement and on which issues we need further discussion. To begin that process, I believe, what we will have to do is to ask, one by one, whether the Conference agrees to the re-establishment of NSA, re-establishment of outer space, re-establishment of TIA, establishment of nuclear disarmament and the appointment of special coordinators on (1) expansion; (2) agenda; (3) improved and effective functioning. So you have, actually speaking, seven questions to ask. I think, without wasting the time of the Conference, we can go quickly through this procedure, which will give us an understanding as to which issues require further discussions, formally or informally, or whatever it is.

Mr. BERGUNO (Chile) (translated from Spanish): I think that enough has been said about these issues, and in particular the last speakers, the Ambassador of Cuba and the representative of Colombia, were very clear. I think that the procedure that has been suggested is entirely, not just compatible but in conformity with the spirit and the meaning of the rules of procedure. When I spoke this morning I mentioned the fact that we had held a plenary meeting on Tuesday at your suggestion, Madam, in consultation with your predecessor. As the secretariat explained that decision, it referred to a decision by the Conference which established the framework for what we call the programme of work. The framework refers really to programming the activities of the Conference, and in that context it was suggested that the secretariat at the time should produce what might be called a simplified proposal. What does this refer to? This simply refers to the fact that, during a first stage, for example, general statements are heard, in a second stage the issues on the agenda are taken in a given order - that is the schedule mentioned there, and that is the programme of work, and nothing else. We, the Group of 21, have said in a document how we would like the programme of work to be applied. Obviously, not in the terms in which it ought to have been done since the beginning of the year, but as regards the specific content of each of the topics. So there is nothing that will exist substantively as a programme of work if we do not take decisions on each of these questions and it has rightly been said, and my delegation has strongly urged that,

legitimately, the question should be asked and a reply and a decision obtained on the question of the coordinator on anti-personnel mines, and with the same vehemence, and just as rightly, and just as legitimately, I think that we can raise the question, on each of the topics we have already adopted as an agenda, what machinery is appropriate and what machinery this Conference is prepared to accept. The order in which it was formulated by Sri Lanka has been endorsed by delegations in various groups and in addition it is backed up by experience and awareness regarding these issues. Let us, then, proceed to consider them and I urgently and strongly agree that we should do so before the closure of our meeting.

Mr. AFZAL (Pakistan): My delegation is listening to the debate very carefully. The representative of Sri Lanka has made a very specific proposal. We believe that he crafted it very carefully. He has tried to keep in sequence, first the non-controversial issues, and he has requested that we should ask specific questions from this house on each one of them. In the meantime, we have heard proposals from other delegations which, needless to say, still are subject to controversy. We would ask you, Madam President, to take up first the proposal of Sri Lanka and ask those special questions from the house, and then take up the proposals by others. We hope that no effort will be made here to make linkages. We believe that there is a need for the improvement of the climate in this house. In the morning you have seen a sense of cooperation from all the delegations, and we hope that this sense of cooperation will be maintained.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): Just to remind you, Madam President, that my delegation, in its statement this morning, had also pointed to the issue of "cut-off". I don't know whether this is covered. So if you should ask questions, we would be very grateful if this could be included as well.

Mr. RAO (India): We could go along with the suggestion of Sri Lanka regarding the method which you intend to follow. I would like to draw your attention to CD/1463 in which we, along with 25 other countries of the Group of 21, have proposed a specific mandate for the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. This is in conjunction with the proposal which was made by the Group of 21 in CD/1462, wherein it was mentioned that "a specific proposal on a mandate for the ad hoc committee will be presented", and this proposed mandate includes FMCT.

Ms. CRITTENBERGER (United States of America): Madam President, our delegation is totally in your hands as to how we proceed now. We are prepared to take decisions point by point. We can take them starting from the middle out, inside out, upside down. It seems to us that all the proposals that are on the table should be part of the discussion, but we can start with the proposal made by Sri Lanka. It seems to me, however - and we are prepared to do this, we don't object - but at the same time it seems to me the discussion we have listened to in the last half-hour or 45 minutes indicates that (1) there is a willingness to take some decisions, (2) that perhaps there may be even some decisions we can take, and (3) that it might be useful to have an informal discussion of what those might be to pave the way for them, and that perhaps the consultations that others have been calling for for some time are

(Ms. Crittenberger, United States)

now ripe to be held, and that perhaps we are on the verge of being able to take some decisions. Whether we proceed to take them now, or whether we discuss what it is and try to create the framework so that we will know what we are going to do, we are in your hands.

Mr. ZEMSKOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): First of all, Madam President, allow me to congratulate you on taking up this honourable and responsible post and wish you every success in your already successful starting period. I would like to support and associate myself with what was just said by the distinguished representative of the United States. I think it is premature now to embark on a detailed survey of views in a formal plenary session insofar as the questions related to the individual items of the programme of work have practically not been discussed. So I think it would be useful and necessary to conduct detailed open-ended consultations in any format which you might decide on, Madam.

Mr. SHA (China) (translated from Chinese): My statement will be very short. One sentence: the Chinese delegation supports the request by the delegation from Sri Lanka.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of China for his statement. On the one hand, we have a proposal from the delegation of Sri Lanka that we should take a decision, item by item, on the establishment of four ad hoc committees and three special coordinators; several delegations have supported this proposal. On the other hand, we have a proposal based on rule 28 of the rules of procedure that we should first adopt the programme of work and then establish ad hoc committees. There are other delegations which are asking for more consultations. I think the most sensible course would be to open informal consultations immediately and perhaps continue the plenary session tomorrow. I give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): With all due respect, Madam, allow me to protest. I think that we are applying double standards, compared to what occurred in this Conference just three plenaries ago. Three plenaries ago - it is true that you were not in the Chair - it was demanded that the President put before the Conference a specific draft decision drawn up by several delegations and it was said that every delegation had the right to ask the Conference to take a position on a given proposal. Now, Madam, the rules of the game are being changed. There has been a specific proposal from the delegation of Sri Lanka. This specific proposal has been given broad backing, and they want to involve us in what was refused a fortnight ago, that is, informal consultations. Fifteen days ago, my delegation grew weary with asking for informal consultations, and they were denied me. The decision we took today on the appointment of a coordinator for the mines issue could have been taken three plenaries ago if we had had informal consultations, and I was denied them. I protest at this way of proceeding.

Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka): May I remind you, Madam President, and the members of the Conference that I made this proposal in the morning plenary, and it was during that plenary these questions should have been put forward to the Conference? It was not done because we passed the time, 1 o'clock, and there was a proposal for a particular manner in which we should proceed in the afternoon. Secondly, the proposal of the Group of 21, although I was not making that particular proposal, has been before us since 5 June 1997, whereas the proposal which we adopted was put forward on 19 June. Thirdly, we have not only adopted the decision contained in CD/1465, but very speedily we have gone and taken a decision with regard to the Special Coordinator as well. Now my proposal was very simple, that is, to find out formally in the plenary whether there is agreement to the establishment of four ad hoc committees, and of course if the proposal of the distinguished Ambassador of Germany is to be taken, it can be taken later after my proposal is put forward. I have asked you to put forward questions with regard to four ad hoc committees and the appointment of three special rapporteurs. So I would like to ask you once again, before we conclude this plenary, to ask the Conference whether we are in a position to take a decision on these matters. If we are able to decide, it is well and good. Then we would have more than one decision adopted on 26 June. If we are unable to do so, we understand, because we operate on the basis of consensus, we can't force anybody, and we will engage in consultations which you could not do for a variety of reasons in the past, and decide on what exactly can be done with regard to the issues that are before us. So I ask you once again, please put the questions to the Conference and we will find out what exactly the position of the Conference is on the establishment of the four ad hoc committees and three special coordinators, and after that we can take the issue put forward by the distinguished Ambassador of Germany.

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): Madam, the Ambassador of Sri Lanka has broadly made the same point as the one I wanted to make, namely that it would seem to me normal for us to reply first of all to the questions from Sri Lanka and then to the question on the "cut-off" posed by Germany, by virtue of the principle of equality of treatment to which France is attached among the States of this Conference. I think it is obvious there is agreement in the room that we should answer the Ambassador of Sri Lanka's questions during this plenary session. As to whether it is useful to suspend the meeting and resume it tomorrow, as to whether we should answer this evening or tomorrow morning - my delegation is ready to answer this evening, it is ready to answer tomorrow morning. However - and this is perhaps the only point which I want to make to defend the idea which you put forward - it is possible to have a night to raise the question with our capitals, allowing the national positions of certain countries to evolve so as to reflect the positive developments which have occurred today, because obviously on the proposal of Sri Lanka, we are ready to respond, and indeed there are a number of points which we are ready to accept, but quite clearly also the instructions which certain countries have here are instructions which were mostly given before the decision on the Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines was taken. That is the only point I wished to raise.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): This morning, in my statement, I referred to the proposal of the Western Group of last year, which referred explicitly to ad hoc committees to be set up on negative security assurances, outer space and transparency in armaments, plus the three special coordinators, and I also referred to the issue of a fissile cut-off treaty. If my understanding is correct, the delegation of Sri Lanka expressly referred to this statement and to the proposal contained therein, so the question is whether we should not look first at this proposal, because in this afternoon's statement I think the proposal by Sri Lanka was somewhat changed or enlarged, and so I would like to have clarification on how we should proceed. Of course, we are ready to decide now, or tomorrow, either in plenary or informal consultations.

Mr. AMAT FORES (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): I decided to take the floor again because we wanted to voice a few thoughts in relation to this new situation in which we find ourselves. I am trying to refer to the situation which, a short time ago, and with similar situations, we had to cope with. When we asked for more consultations on the mines issue, we were told that we had already had sufficient time to consider it. When my delegation, together with other delegations, said there were other proposals, we were told that no linkages would be established. Today there has been a decision on mines, and therefore there's no linkage. Why not proceed? What is happening now? When we asked for informal consultations, and Syria did so a very short time ago, he got silence for an answer. So why this double standard? Either the rules are applied to all or they're not applied at all. Are we going to operate with a double standard? We endorse the protest voiced by the distinguished Ambassador of Mexico, and with all due respect, we insist that the President should put the question that in our view she should put.

Mr. SABOIA (Brazil): I take the floor to express the view of Brazil on this issue, and I would like to say that my delegation supports putting the proposal of Sri Lanka to the decision of the Conference. We have heard many views in this respect, many have supported it, and I think the proposal is very simple and is in accordance with the rules of procedure. We have, in fact, to be consistent in the application of the rules of procedure of this Conference, and it has been indicated on a very recent occasion, it was established that a delegation has the right to ask the Conference to have a decision put for its consideration as soon as it is made. Therefore, my delegation also supports that way of proceeding.

Mr. LAMDAN (Israel): Madam President, since this is the first time I am taking the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you and let me also add my voice of felicitation for the extraordinary success which you have managed to achieve in the first few days of your presidency. We for our part recognize the constructive approach being offered by the delegation of Sri Lanka, but at the same time we find ourselves inclined to agree with the proposals being made by certain delegations that the time is perhaps ripe for further consultations before we rush headlong into decisions and perhaps get carried away with ourselves. In any event, I at least must say in all frankness, we, Israel, are not in a position to express positions on the questions if they are put this evening because we do not have instructions, and hence I must associate myself with the proposal being made by the representative of France that at least we have the grace of one night to seek instructions and clarification.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Israel for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom.

Mr. TAUWHARE (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Could I just seek clarification on one point in the proposal by the distinguished Ambassador of Sri Lanka? If questions are to be asked on establishing ad hoc committees on these various subjects, what mandate for each of these ad hoc committees would be involved? There are obviously mandates that date back to the time when these committees last met. Are we talking about those mandates, or are we talking about some new mandate which is yet to be negotiated?

Mrs. TINCOPA (Peru) (translated from Spanish): In view of the fact that time presses, I will leave my compliments and thanks for another occasion, Madam President. Very briefly, we wish to offer the support of my delegation for the proposal made by the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, and to request you to consult the Conference on this proposal. We are making this request with the sole aim of seeking progress on the issues on which there is consensus in this Conference.

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): Very briefly so that things are perfectly clear. We are prepared to discuss and take a position on the decisions put to us this evening, and we are not asking for deferral until tomorrow. We leave it to the Conference and its members to gauge whether it is appropriate or not to postpone matters to tomorrow, but in saying this we would not wish in any way to give credence to the idea that there are double standards. If a single State wants the decision to be taken today, we are ready.

Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka): This is in reply to the question posed by the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom. The Ad Hoc Committees on Negative Security Assurances, Outer Space and Transparency in Armaments are no new subjects to us. We have had these Ad Hoc Committees before, and when the decision is taken with regard to the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committees, I am sure various delegations will explain their positions on the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committees and, if necessary, on the mandate as well. With regard to the proposed ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, I would merely like to refer to the proposed mandate contained in CD/1463.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Sri Lanka for his statement. In view of the fact that the interpreters are available only until 6.15 p.m., and that I still have speakers on the list, I do not wish to create a situation of double standards, and so I recommend and propose - I would like to have your views on this - that we suspend this plenary and we resume it tomorrow. I give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mr. BERGUÑO (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Madam President, is it your proposal that we suspend this meeting and resume it specifically with the questions that the delegation of Sri Lanka asked to be put to the Conference?

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): Yes, that is my intention. I give the floor to the representative of the United Kingdom.

Mr. TAUWHARE (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): I am sorry to come back again. I was grateful to the distinguished Ambassador of Sri Lanka for his response to my question. I am afraid I am still not entirely clear. If we are to have the evening to seek instructions on the question, it would be helpful to be able to inform our capitals of what the questions are that are to be put to us tomorrow. That will, I assume, not just simply be to establish an ad hoc committee on such and such a subject, but would also spell out exactly what mandate the subject was to be debated under. I think we really do need clarification of that point in advance before we are able to either seek instructions or take a decision. Indeed, I mean, if the question is to be put before us, can we have, ideally, something in writing so that we can see what it looks like? I am not insisting on that - perhaps it can be spelt out now. But are we talking about the old mandates or are we talking about the possibility of discussing new mandates? - because if that possibility is open, we would like to be aware of it.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom. I propose open-ended consultations tomorrow morning and in the afternoon we will resume the plenary. I give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): The proposal was made by Sri Lanka and my delegation will accept any course of action accepted by Sri Lanka. My delegation would simply like to place on record its formal protest at the way in which we are proceeding. Double standards are being applied. It is true it is 6.10 p.m. If I remember correctly, it was on 12 June that we were forced to take a decision at 1.35 p.m., when most delegations had commitments for lunch and the interpreters were also about to leave. I will accept whatever the representative of Sri Lanka accepts. On the previous occasion when a delegation made a specific proposal, several delegations asked, and Mexico was not the only one, for informal consultations and we were denied them. We were told, I repeat, that every delegation has the right to make a proposal, and has the right for the President to put that proposal to the Conference for consideration, and for the Conference to take a decision. Today we are following a different procedure and adopting a different yardstick. Judging by what we have seen, when proposals come from a delegation in the Group of 21 they receive treatment that is different from when they come from other groups.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I have listened carefully to all the proposals, and I have not refused any of them. I propose that we hold a plenary meeting tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

The meeting was suspended at 6.15 p.m. on Thursday 26 June 1997 and resumed at 10.35 a.m. on Friday 27 June 1997.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The 770th plenary meeting is resumed. The representative of Myanmar has asked for the floor as Coordinator of the Group of 21. I give him the floor.

Mr. ABEL (Myanmar): First of all, Madam President, may I congratulate you on behalf of the Group and also on our own behalf on your assumption of the presidency at this crucial juncture? You have achieved a certain degree of success in a few days, and I hope that the momentum will continue today. My thanks and appreciation also go to your predecessor, Ambassador Diallo of Senegal, for her energetic efforts for the Conference during her presidency.

In my capacity as the Coordinator of the Group of 21, I would like to make the following points. First, the Group of 21 continues to attach the highest priority to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. Secondly, without prejudice to the Group's proposal in document CD/1462, dated 5 June 1997, a proposal was submitted by the delegation of Sri Lanka, which was supported by many delegations from different groups, and therefore I would like to request that the Conference take immediate action on that proposal without any further delay.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Myanmar for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. In accordance with the agreement reached yesterday afternoon, I invite the Conference to consider the proposal presented by the representative of Sri Lanka concerning the programme of work of the Conference. I would therefore like to invite the Conference to make a decision on the elements of that proposal. First, is there agreement for the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Effective International Arrangements to Assure Non-nuclear-weapon States against the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons? I would like to remind you in this regard that the last mandate adopted by the Conference on Disarmament for the Committee appears in document CD/1121. I give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. MOHER (Canada): Canada did not intervene yesterday when we started down this particular path because, quite frankly, we were not quite sure where we were starting and where we were going to end up. We believe that it is essential that the CD be able to consider elements that various delegations and various groups feel are important and should or might be included in our work. The question of what those items should be, and how they should be pursued, I think has to be carefully considered. The question of looking at a question of an ad hoc committee with a mandate that we have not had the opportunity to sit down and to consult about informally under your guidance or in any other way you see fit, but merely just establishing an ad hoc committee, and doing so in a kind of expeditious fashion, we have serious reservations about. We are willing to look at any proposal for work, in any order that the Conference wishes to pursue. Delegations in this room know clearly what Canada's national views are in that regard. We have tried very hard to make those clear in spoken form and in written form, but we know a number of our views are not totally shared in this room and that our priorities may not necessarily be shared in this room. But I was, and am, reluctant to continue the way that we have started here, following upon my

friend from Sri Lanka's proposal yesterday, in a yes-or-no format, which is not a process which gives us an opportunity to explore what we really are agreeing to do and whether we really do think it is important, viable, achievable, worthwhile. Now against that background, I think my objective is not to be taking a definitive position on any particular mechanism or any particular mandate at this point, but I do question whether this is the kind of process that is a useful one and a productive one for us to pursue. I felt it was unfair to you, Madam, and to other members of the CD not to at least raise that point here this morning before we actually start taking decisions as you indicated as our President you felt you would have to proceed. We will continue to try to be as helpful to you as possible.

Mr. KREID (Austria): We did take the floor yesterday, as will be remembered. What I was trying to convey is that we basically were sympathetic about looking at the possibilities of adding to our work, and that we had this proposal from Sri Lanka. However, as will be remembered, I said we take a risk in going step by step, and might be very disappointed at the end of this process. Having listened to our colleague from Canada, it is obvious that we cannot rush into adopting a proposal here which leads us to the institution of ad hoc committees or of coordinators without even having had time to look at the details of the mandate or at the details of the terms of reference. So our understanding would have been that if you ask this question, Madam - and of course it is in itself maybe not the most elegant and most productive method to ask seven questions, one after the other - but if you ask this question and you find that there is readiness among delegations to deal with this item, it seems to be inevitable to me that we have to move into an informal consultation in order to establish the details, as has been pointed out by Ambassador Moher. We cannot simply say we decide here and now, without further deliberations, to establish an ad hoc committee, or whatever it is. This, at least, was our understanding. We did not object against the principle of moving along the lines of Sri Lanka's suggestion, but of course it would have been rather naive to believe that everybody would say, "Yes, let's have it right now and on the spot".

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): My delegation had the opportunity to make an intervention yesterday in which we welcomed the appointment of a Special Coordinator on landmines, and I would like to take this opportunity once again to say that this was a wise move on the part of the Conference, a proposal which Pakistan had put forward on 30 January, and we are very glad that we were able to adopt it before 30 June. Having said that, I think that my delegation is in a comfortable position to also speak about the rest of the actions that this Conference should take with regard to its programme of work. Over the course of the past months, we have had within this hall, as well as outside, loud lamentations about the Conference on Disarmament, about its inability to reach decisions and about the absence of negotiating mechanisms that could address the items on the agenda. We took a first step yesterday to respond to these criticisms and lamentations. The Group of 21 feels, however, that the action that we took yesterday is not sufficient and that there are several other issues on which apparently, and I underline "apparently", there is no disagreement within the Conference with regard to the negotiations that we have to undertake. Indeed, there are items, such as the issue of negative

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

security assurances, on which we have already negotiated. We have in the past created ad hoc committees. We have agreed on a mandate, and one on which no one in the Conference has, at least openly, expressed opposition. Therefore, it seems to my delegation, and I believe to the Group of 21, that the Conference on Disarmament should capture the momentum that we generated yesterday and take decisions on those further issues on which there is no opposition. I believe that on the issue of negative security assurances, which has been proposed as the first item by the delegation of Sri Lanka, supported by the Group of 21, there is no opposition, and therefore we hope that the Conference will be able to approve the re-establishment of that Ad Hoc Committee today, with the mandate that is contained in document CD/1121, and we hope that you will put that proposition to the Conference, Madam. Even in the statement that we heard from the distinguished Ambassador of Canada, we did not detect any opposition to this proposal, and I hope he will confirm that - that there is no opposition to the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances. So my proposal is that you put it formally to the Conference and ask if there is any opposition to the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances.

Mr. SHA (China) (translated from Chinese): My delegation is most pleased that yesterday we came to a consensus decision on the question of APLs and decided to appoint a special coordinator. My delegation welcomes the decision. In fact, this is a decision welcomed by all of us. Under your presidency, Madam President, as well as with efforts by your predecessors, this is the only result achieved by the CD this year. This is something very gratifying.

During yesterday's plenary, my delegation listened very carefully to the views expressed by all sides. The impression we had was that on the question of the work programme the CD could not devote itself to only the question of APLs. In other words, we should at the same time work on other issues. I didn't hear any objection to that understanding. In view of that, it is only appropriate for us to take decisions with regard to other items in the work programme. As to whether we eventually can come to a decision, that will only be clear when we reach the point of making that decision. If we cannot come to a decision we can still have informal consultations. However, there is one point that has to be clear: the CD cannot concentrate on landmines alone. That is the first point I would like to make.

Next, on the NSA issue. That is also the first issue raised by the distinguished Ambassador of Sri Lanka which calls for our decision. My delegation certainly supports his proposition. On this issue, my delegation would give its unwavering support to the legitimate demand from the G-21. The reason is as follows: in recent years there have been great changes. Although we are confronted with various kinds of difficulties in the international situation, changes of a fundamental nature have occurred. This is a fact of life. In other words, the cold war is over. Under the new international circumstances the nuclear Powers have no reason whatsoever not to provide the non-nuclear-weapon States with assurances not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against them. In particular, in 1995 the NPT

(Mr. Sha, China)

Treaty was extended indefinitely. Most non-nuclear-weapon States supported the indefinite extension of that treaty or at least accepted the indefinite extension. Despite the fact that China itself is a nuclear Power, my delegation holds the view that this constitutes maximum flexibility and a sacrifice made on the part of non-nuclear-weapon States. Therefore, the non-nuclear-weapon States' demand for early assurances not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against them is absolutely legitimate. We cannot say that in the world today only nuclear-weapon States should enjoy absolute security whereas other countries shall not have what they deserve in terms of security. Therefore, if a decision is put to a vote, my delegation will resolutely support the establishment of an ad hoc committee. With regard to the mandate of that ad hoc committee, a mandate is already contained in CD/1121. To be frank, my delegation is not entirely pleased with such a weak mandate. That mandate is outdated. However, since the G-21 is ready to use such a mandate, my delegation can agree to take that mandate as a basis. Given the fact that the mandate contained in CD/1121 was agreeable to all of us in 1992, five years later in 1997 such a weak mandate should be even more acceptable. If there is any change to be negotiated, the mandate should be drastically strengthened. These are the views I would like to set out for the time being.

Mr. GHOSE (India): Like most of the speakers before me, I too am very relieved that we were able to take a decision yesterday. As I had pointed out in the plenary yesterday, the decision contained a very important paragraph, which was the chapeau, and I had also said that we needed to start working immediately on the implementation of the chapeau of document CD/1465, and that of course brings us to the other items on the programme of work. The agenda, which we adopted by consensus, does contain agenda item 4. It has been with us since 14 February. It calls for effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. That was agreed to. In addition, as pointed out by the Ambassador of Sri Lanka yesterday in his proposal, and as supported by the G-21, to the best of my knowledge, and not just my knowledge, but my information, the Western Group on 11 September 1996 presented its observations on the agenda and work programme of the CD in 1997, and we see there, in document CD/1434, that it said in this as the German Ambassador quoted yesterday: "Ad hoc committees could be set up immediately on negative security assurances, outer space and TIA", and of course there is a sentence there which says that mandates for the ad hoc committees could be updated. Then I also recall that in his intervention, the distinguished Ambassador of Austria, about two months ago - I have lost track of time, but some time during the last session, in a major intervention in the plenary - had in fact suggested that an ad hoc committee on NSA could be set up, that this was one of the ad hoc committees that could be set up. Taking all of this into account, and because the G-21 wants the CD to start moving on issues which are of priority to a large number of countries, this was included in the programme of work which was presented by the G-21 on 5 June 1997 in document CD/1462, and as the Coordinator of the G-21 said today, the proposal of the Ambassador of Sri Lanka is without prejudice to the priorities that we continue to have on the setting up of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. This is an attempt, as we see it, from the delegation of Sri Lanka to get a decision here today in the CD so

(Ms. Ghose, India)

that we can move, try to agree on whatever we can agree on immediately, and then move on to the areas which are priority areas for us, through consultations. Those consultations would be necessary.

On the issue of the mandate, I am a little puzzled. I thought at one stage when we were talking informally about an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, we were being told to agree to an ad hoc committee without a mandate, and that would have been acceptable to a large number of countries. But the Ad Hoc Committee on NSA has a mandate in document CD/1121, and I agree with Ambassador Sha of China - this will need to be updated. We can do that once we take the decision to establish the Ad Hoc Committee. There is no question that we would need to update this particular mandate. Therefore, having made these points, I would like to support what was proposed by the Ambassador of Pakistan a few minutes ago, that we now see whether there is any opposition to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on NSA at this session. What I gather from two of the speakers earlier was not an opposition, but a hesitation. I think since we had time overnight to overcome these hesitations, these oppositions which have been publicly stated on the desirability of an ad hoc committee on NSA, we as a Conference should be in a position to take a decision now on this particular issue. But I would like to support what the Ambassador of Pakistan has proposed, that you ask us, the Conference, whether there is any opposition. If there is not, let us establish this committee and go on to the next item. Once the decision is taken, we will certainly have discussions on the mandate contained in document CD/1121, which would form a good basis for us to start. We are not starting afresh. This is not something brand new.

Mr. MARTINEZ MORCILLO (Spain) (translated from Spanish): This Francisco de Vitoria room that we are meeting in is charged with history, and I think yesterday a new important chapter was added to that history, because yesterday the Conference on Disarmament took an important step in establishing the first stage, the first element of what my delegation hopes will be a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament this year. I understand in my personal interpretation of yesterday's meeting, apart from the work done by you, Madam President, which prompts my complete admiration for the truly splendid way in which you accomplished your work, that the decision that was adopted was first and foremost the fruit of an attitude which I believe is unanimous in this Conference. It is the determination of the vast majority of delegations to move forward, to establish a consistent programme of work and truly succeed in demonstrating that the Conference on Disarmament can, in the future, continue to be one of the basic bodies of today's international relations. At the same time for me there is a clear idea, namely that no one wants the mines issue to be the only one before this Conference. From that starting-point, I would like to give voice to the greatest doubts about the productiveness, the effectiveness and the usefulness of the path on which we have embarked this morning. My delegation has absolutely no problem in considering the proposal contained in document CD/1462 as a basis for discussion. We feel that it could be a good working document, and it could be a magnificent point of departure. But my delegation has many doubts as to whether the outcome of consideration of this issue, this proposal today will be useful and fruitful for the Conference. This does not mean that my

(Mr. Martínez Morcillo, Spain)

delegation, if the members of this Conference so wish, is not ready and prepared to take decisions on each one of them. But all the proposals, all the elements of this proposal, raise many doubts for my delegation, and although it is true that there are some clear trends in the Conference, I feel that before we take decisions, it would be wise to clear up these doubts, clarify our position and try to move closer to positions of compromise and understanding. I repeat that my delegation has doubts in general, and has doubts in that regard on the matter at present before us for decision. My delegation has absolutely no doubt about its position. It has very clear instructions on each of the issues, on the general attitude that the Spanish delegation should adopt during this first stage of its participation in this Conference on Disarmament. My delegation is indeed ready to take a decision on this. I can assure you, Madam President, that if today this Conference on Disarmament takes a decision to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on nuclear assurances, my delegation's certainty on its position will be completely filled with doubts and difficulties when it comes to explain to its Government what has been decided, how this Ad Hoc Committee is constituted within the present structure of international relations, whether the Committee takes into account the political circumstances of 1997, whether the Committee takes into account that there has been a process of development and progress in the Non-Proliferation Treaty. These are the doubts which, I confess, my delegation will have great difficulty in explaining to its Government.

Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh): My delegation did not take the floor yesterday. I should therefore like to begin today by conveying through you, Madam, and through our Australian representative here our sincere congratulations to my friend and colleague, Ambassador John Campbell, upon his appointment as Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines. His task will not be easy but he is a man of prodigious capabilities and with the excellent back-up support that he has at his Mission and in Canberra, I am confident that he will do a splendid job.

For the CD it would be a pity if progress in our work were to stop there. We are now addressing a definite set of proposals from the distinguished Ambassador of Sri Lanka. These have the merit of being reasonable. They command wide cross-group support, and this is important in the context of the CD. Thirdly, it will give us something to report to the General Assembly, something definite, the absence of the possibility of which was a concern that was expressed here. I agree with my Austrian colleague that it does not look very elegant for you to ask one question after another, but if that is the process or procedure by which we are able to achieve progress, my delegation for one, and I am sure others around, would be willing to sacrifice a modicum of elegance for progress in this house. I would therefore support the proposal of Pakistan, as supported thereafter by India and others, that you ask the question whether we are prepared to have an ad hoc committee on NSA, and if that be so, let us go forth with no further ado.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): I shall be as brief as possible. The statement made by the Coordinator of the Group of 21 is a statement which I fully support. I also support the statements made by my colleagues members of the Group of 21 and by the Ambassador of China concerning this subject which is under consideration.

The question raised concerns the establishment of an ad hoc committee on NSA. We strongly endorse the need to put this question forward and we support the re-establishment of this ad hoc committee so that it can start working immediately in order to provide the necessary assurances to non-nuclear States within the framework of a legally binding international multilateral instrument that provides such guarantees for non-nuclear States.

This topic was among the vital issues which we have raised and in the deliberation of which we have previously participated very actively at the CD. We consider this issue extremely important since, as long as we are unable to eliminate nuclear weapons completely, there will always be an urgent need to give legally binding multilateral guarantees to the non-nuclear States in order to assure them against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. So long as nuclear weapons exist, we will always need these guarantees in a legally binding international multilateral instrument.

If we had succeeded in eliminating nuclear weapons, we would not need such guarantees. However, since this urgent need exists, we hope that this question will be answered and we hope that the answer will be in the affirmative. My country's delegation supports this proposal and endorses the statements made by my colleagues, the Ambassadors and representatives of various countries, who have spoken in favour of the establishment of this committee, bearing in mind the fact that the top priority is obviously nuclear disarmament.

We have approved the decision concerning the establishment of the post of Special Coordinator to deal with the question of landmines, and we are happy that the Special Coordinator is the Ambassador of Australia. We have full confidence in his ability and in the ability of his country's delegation in this regard. However, we approved that decision with some reluctance because this issue is not accorded priority on our agenda. Nevertheless we approved the decision in good faith while, at the same time, stressing the need to deal with the programme of work for the CD. The question put forward now is a question which we support because we have agreed to the indefinite extension of the NPT on the basis of the decision on objectives and principles and we even participated in the drafting of that decision, which stressed the need for a legally binding international multilateral instrument to deal with this issue because we were not convinced by Security Council resolution 984 which referred to unilateral and multilateral assurances given by the nuclear Powers in this regard. We considered this resolution insufficient.

In the light of this explanation, which might help colleagues to understand the background to this issue, the delegation of Egypt fully supports the establishment of this committee, and, if the mandate is incomplete, we are ready to complete it. We too believe that it is incomplete

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

because we need comprehensive security assurances, on which we stand ready to negotiate, within the framework of an ad hoc committee on this subject, and to consider whether it is possible to develop this mandate. We are ready to start negotiations on the basis of the existing mandate. Madam President, since I have heard no objection to the establishment of this committee, I hope that you will immediately put this question to the members of the Conference.

Mr. BAALLAL (Algeria): Since my delegation is taking the floor for the first time under your presidency, Madam President, and since we are still at the beginning of the morning, I shall venture to express the customary congratulations without fearing that this could be viewed as a waste of time. So allow me to tell you how happy and delighted the Algerian delegation is to see you in the Chair, and how pleased it is at the way in which you are conducting our work. Our gratitude also goes to your predecessor, the Ambassador of Senegal, and his delegation. It is really a pleasure for the delegation of Algeria to see the podium in our chamber today occupied by three delegations which, a few months ago, were observers and are now taking full part in our work and are presiding over it.

I had understood yesterday at the end of the afternoon when you suspended our plenary that you were doing so because of time constraints so as to be able to release the interpreters and delegations who had commitments. This suspension happily gave delegations an opportunity to have time overnight to think and perhaps even to consult with their capitals. For its part, the Algerian delegation has been ready since yesterday to respond to the questions that the Ambassador of Sri Lanka had asked you to put to us. My delegation had prepared for that because it had felt that we could not do otherwise than accede to this request, which is based on the rules of procedure of our Conference and on the practice as I have witnessed it here. My delegation therefore considers that this is a sound, pragmatic and constructive approach, insofar as, at least as I understand it, it may allow us to take immediate decisions on consensual points and to entrust those points that are not subject to a consensus to your consultations - consultations that you will be free to hold perhaps even during the inter-sessional period. So Madam President, seven questions were asked yesterday, and my delegation, like many others in this chamber, is ready to respond by silence which means consent if it agrees, or by saying no if it does not agree. Doubts have been expressed as to the effectiveness of this approach. If it is a good one, it will enable us to take immediate decisions. If it is not, we will not take any decisions. You began with a first question this morning; I think we could continue in this direction and pursue this exercise.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of France.

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): First of all, I should like to record my satisfaction at the developments which occurred yesterday, not only because we were able to take a decision with regard to a special coordinator on mines, but also because yesterday's meeting enabled the Ambassador of Sri Lanka to propose a useful approach which involves

(Mr. Rivasseau, France)

considering each subject on its own merits, independently of any package. I think this is also an important achievement from yesterday's meeting. Having said that, we must express a view on the different elements of the seven questions posed by Sri Lanka, to which we should add, as you know, the question posed by Germany. I would like to associate myself with the deep doubts expressed by Spain, Canada and Austria about the most appropriate method of taking decisions on the questions raised by Sri Lanka. If I may refer to the past, with regard to the decision on mines, we first had a verbal proposal made by Finland in mid-March. That proposal was then put in writing. It received a CD symbol on 31 March. Then we held informal consultations under the auspices of the President, which led to a document issued on 22 May, and we were able to take the decision we took yesterday.

On the question of security assurances, it seems to us that on some of the questions raised by Sri Lanka we have reached the point we were at with regard to mines on 15 March, in that we have no written proposal. So I think that the first stage before we do anything else - and this could be done in a quarter of an hour - is for us to have a proposal in writing. If not, I am afraid that the decision-making process here will not move forward in a constructive manner and that we will lose the momentum we have today which my delegation particularly wants to preserve.

Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka): I have been listening to the discussion this morning with great interest, and particularly to the remarks made by the distinguished representative of France. First of all, I would like to remind the Conference that last week there was a proposal by the representative of Syria for informal consultations, and there were no comments, which led him to say that if there are no objections, perhaps we could then go ahead and establish the mechanisms enumerated in document CD/1462. Now we hear the long and difficult path we followed with regard to the landmines. It is true, and we are happy that we have a decision as well as another decision to appoint a Special Coordinator, and we congratulate the Ambassador of Australia in his difficult task. If we want to go back to the proposals in documents, we can start with the proposal contained in document CD/1434 of 16 September, proposed by the Western Group. If that is not sufficient, we can go to the proposal which is contained, once again in written form, in document CD/1462. So there are no difficulties with regard to these written proposals. But with regard to NSA, the proposal is very simple. If there is no objection - I repeat the word "objection" - to the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on NSA, and there is sufficient institutional memory here, that Committee functioned with a particular mandate, and the distinguished Ambassador of India pointed out, following the comments made by the distinguished Ambassador of China, that the mandate of that particular committee is not considered good enough. That could be discussed. Now the question you have asked from the Conference is whether there is any objection, and I have not heard any objection so far. Perhaps you can go ahead and establish the ad hoc committee and move on to the next item, because we have about six or seven different items and I think at least we should try to finish this discussion during the course of this morning.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): I have asked for the floor merely because I have listened very carefully to several of the statements that have been made, and particularly to the statement of my distinguished friend from France. He stated that we have to consider decisions on the basis of documents, and I think that the distinguished Ambassador of Sri Lanka has already drawn his attention to the fact that the proposal on negative security assurances has been on the table for several weeks, if not months, and it is time that we take a decision. This proposal was specifically made, for example, by the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran in document CD/1450 on 20 March 1997. It is the first point in that proposal of Iran. It was not considered. The Group of 21 thereafter on 5 June submitted document CD/1462 in which there is also a written proposal to establish the ad hoc committee on negative security assurances. Therefore, I believe that the argument that we should be obliged to go through the tortuous process which we were obliged to go through on the question of anti-personnel landmines, that it ought to be repeated on each proposal on each action which the Conference on Disarmament takes, I think is something that I certainly hope we will not make a habit of, and I would very gently seek to persuade my colleague from France away from that path of action. From the statements that we have heard, there has been, as far as we can see, no objection to the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances. We are prepared to discuss the question of the mandate, of updating the mandate, after the re-establishment of the Committee. Therefore, we would urge you, Madam, that you put to the house whether there is any objection to the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances, and if there is not, let us take a decision today to re-establish this Committee. We can then move on to other issues.

Ms. CRITTENBERGER (United States of America): I, too, have listened with interest to the discussion this morning. Perhaps one of the things we might want to consider under the category of improved and effective functioning is how to rearrange the room so that we can look at each other when we talk.

On a serious note, my delegation welcomes the decision taken yesterday to appoint a Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines, and as has already been noted by my distinguished colleague from France, that is a decision that had been several months in the works as it had been the subject of several pieces of paper and several revisions. Its success we welcome and perhaps we can call it momentum, perhaps it is not momentum.

The question we are now facing today is that we are being asked to decide on issues of much greater import, i.e. what it is that we are actually going to agree to work on. The Special Coordinator would help us perhaps find some work to do on landmines, but at this point we have not agreed to do it. It seems to me that we need time to reflect on this and to give these important questions the consideration they deserve. My delegation, too, wants to take advantage of forward movement but we think that there should be forward movement with due deliberation. I would think we would all agree that the idea is not for the CD just to make work or to be busy or to have

(Ms. Crittenberger, United States)

something to report. The important question is: what is it that we are going to work on? What is it that is worthy of our attention? What is it that is substantive and productive work?

In that context, the question we have been discussing is negative security assurances. There are at least one or two other people in this room that have a history that goes back as far as mine does on the question of negative security assurances. I sat in the Chair of the Working Group at that time in the year 1980, so I am certainly familiar with the issue, and I am familiar with the mandate. At the same time, a lot of time has passed since 1979 when that Ad Hoc Committee, or at that time it was a Working Group, was first established, and indeed, for the reasons already cited by the distinguished Ambassador of China, we believe it is important to have a discussion of what it is and what, as an ad hoc committee, it would do. So, while we do not object to having an ad hoc committee, we think it is important to define what it is that we would do with that ad hoc committee. A lot of things have happened over the past several years. Legally binding assurances have been offered by the nuclear-weapon States in the context of nuclear-weapon-free zones. A Security Council resolution has been passed in the past few years offering positive security assurances. The Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference in 1995 made some recommendations on negative security assurances, and this is indeed an issue that is being looked at in the PrepCom process for the year 2000 Review Conference. So, there is no objection but there is a concern that we have, the discussion about what it is an ad hoc committee would do, and my delegation, for one, is not in a position to agree to select, to appoint, to adopt a decision on an ad hoc committee without knowing first what it is to do. So that is a discussion which seems to me that we have to have before we can agree to adopt that decision.

Ms. GHOSE (India): From what the distinguished representative of the United States said, it is all a matter of perspective. It is where you sit that the view is different. But anyhow, on a serious note, I would not have taken the floor had the distinguished delegate of the United States not raised some very valid points. I noted with interest that she said that the United States does not have an objection to the setting up of an ad hoc committee on NSAs. I am also aware that this is a very old subject, but there was a decision in the General Assembly last year. The document number - and this is for my colleague from France - it is in writing - is A/RES/51/43, dated 7 January 1997. Resolution 51/43 is on the "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons". It is a long resolution and in paragraph 5, it takes into account all the developments since 1989. It said, "Recommends also that the Conference on Disarmament should actively continue intensive negotiations with a view to reaching early agreement and concluding effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, taking into account the widespread support for the conclusion of an international convention and giving consideration to any other proposals designed to secure the same objective". The General Assembly has given us, let us say, as much of a clarification on this issue as recently as late last year.

(Ms. Ghose, India)

I also think we need to make a distinction on another issue. I think landmines did take a long time, yes, but as was pointed out earlier, this was a brand new subject in the CD. It was here for the first time, and people were not aware of how this should be looked at, and this is why a Special Coordinator has been appointed to see how we should, if at all, look at this issue. NSAs is not a new subject, and NSAs, the request for an ad hoc committee, has been coming from different groups, and as the Ambassador of Germany said yesterday, it was a Western Group proposal in 1996. This is their right. This is what they wanted. It is also, as it happens, a G-21 proposal. So today we have the Western Group agreeing to an ad hoc committee on NSAs and the G-21 agree. We should be celebrating this particular event instead of saying that we need more time to see whether in fact we agree, and we have it in writing. We have it in writing from both groups. I also take into account that the Group of 21 has agreed. So we only have the East European Group who have not voiced their views on this subject yet. From my list of speakers, who is objecting today to this decision? As I said, in my view, we need to discuss, certainly, what the mandate would be, once we have taken the decision to have an ad hoc committee to negotiate what the General Assembly has given us, what the General Assembly expects us to do. And to that extent, we have guidelines coming from the General Assembly. Of course, the General Assembly has not got the authority to tell us what to do. We are sovereign. But it is recommended. The international community has recommended to us what it is we should do. We are all agreed on the substance. Why is it that there is this hesitation on this particular decision?

I think I am taking too long. I am getting all kinds of signs from all sides that I should stop. But I really have to express my puzzlement. Is there an objection to setting up an NSA ad hoc committee now, on the understanding that we will be discussing the specific mandate once that decision is taken? Is there an objection?

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): As the Ambassador of India knows better than anyone, but perhaps for those of us who may have somewhat lost sight of it, the General Assembly resolution which has been referred to received an abstention not only by France but I think by all the countries of the European Union. Since I have the floor, and I would not like to have to speak again if at all possible, I would just like to say to the Ambassador of Pakistan that, of course, we do not intend, on subjects other than mines, to follow such tortuous paths - we would like them to be as rapid as possible, but that does not mean that they should not go through the same stages. The stages do not need to be separated by periods of three weeks, but I think if we want to achieve something, we have to go through the same stages. Lastly, I should like to repeat that, of course, the question of negative security assurances has been before this assembly since the beginning of the year, but nevertheless, as far as I know, only about 20 minutes have been devoted to the substantive discussion of it, during the time when Romania was in the Chair, and I would like to repeat that, even if the elements of the decision do in fact appear in various papers, the decision itself which we are invited to adopt has still not been formulated in writing, and I must say that at the time of speaking, having heard what was just indicated by the highly

(Mr. Rivasseau, France)

respected Ambassador of India, or her counterpart from Pakistan, I still do not know whether what we are being asked to do is to set up a committee without a mandate, the mandate of which will be updated, or with the 1992 mandate, that mandate being subject to updating, or with the 1992 mandate with no changes. For that reason, if we want to be able to take a decision, as a previous speaker mentioned, I think what is necessary, and this is not just a delaying tactic because I think it could be done in 10 minutes by the secretariat, is that we should have a paper before us, whether it has a CD symbol or not does not matter, but we should have a piece of paper that explains to us exactly what we are deciding on.

Mr. SHA (China) (translated from Chinese): I apologize for asking for the floor again. In my earlier statement, I mentioned that there is a mandate contained in CD/1121. I said that I was not very satisfied with the mandate and I also said that it could be improved. However, I should like to clarify one thing. My delegation can accept the mandate as it is.

Mr. TAUWHARE (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): As we said on many occasions before, this delegation is of course ready to work constructively and in good faith to get started on some substantive work here in the CD. We regret at least as much as others do the failure of the Conference so far this year to make a start on work which is, in our view, clearly laid out before us. It seems to us that the work of the CD is best focused on substantive negotiations where we can secure some genuine productive achievement rather than in procedural manoeuvring, empty debate and posturing. We are as keen as others to get on with the work. Indeed, it was with this in mind that we worked in the Western Group last year to put together some proposals that were tabled in September 1996, which were referred to yesterday by the German Ambassador and have been picked up subsequently. In the Western Group paper that was tabled, document CD/1434, we made very clear what our objectives were. We argued that the work of the CD should strike a balance between nuclear and conventional items. It should focus on substantive negotiations, and work should start on negotiations which have already been endorsed by the CD, and those were spelt out as being fissile material cut-off, NSAs, outer space, transparency in armaments. So those issues, those four, were clearly before us and had clearly got the support of this delegation. Now I asked last night - I fear I asked twice - if I could have some clarity on what decisions it was that we were expected to take today in order that we could get some instructions or at least have a clearer picture of what it was we were deciding upon. My specific question was, what were to be the mandates of the ad hoc committees we were being asked to establish. I fear I did not get a very clear answer to that then, and I haven't had a clear answer to it today. Listening to the debate, there have been references to the mandate on NSAs in document CD/1121. There have also been references to other documents - CD/1462, UNGA resolutions, possibly no mandate at all. I come back to the question. What are we deciding upon? Are we setting up an ad hoc committee with no mandate, or are we trying to set up an ad hoc committee with a mandate? And if so, what mandate is that, please? On that basis, I would very much support my distinguished French colleague in asking to see what the mandate is. Of course, I have CD/1121 in front of me. If it is to be CD/1121, then let us be clear on that. Once we are clear on

(Mr. Tauwhare, United Kingdom)

that, we can judge whether it is worthwhile proceeding. Again, listening to the discussion this morning, it is clear that there is no agreement, it seems to me, on exactly what the mandate should be. A number of speakers have suggested, let us set up the ad hoc committee with no mandate and then get into discussions on the mandate. The old mandate needs updating. We need to work further on it. That seems to be very sensible. Let us discuss the mandate. But is it sensible to establish the ad hoc committee in advance of agreeing on what the mandate should be? That seems to me putting the cart before the horse. By all means, let us discuss the mandate, and indeed, let us discuss the mandates and their own substance, what work the CD can most effectively do in these various areas, not just NSAs, but in these other areas, too. We are willing to discuss that. But we do not think we will achieve very much if we simply go through a list and set up a whole series of ad hoc committees with no mandate and then proceed to have an argument over what the mandate should be. Does that take us forward? I do not think so. So let us be as clear as we possibly can be what it is that we think the CD can most productively do, what specific mandates we are considering, and then, by all means, proceed to take a decision to establish those ad hoc committees - once we are clear what we are talking about.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): I have, since my last intervention, heard with great interest the remarks that have been made by my colleagues from the United States, France and the United Kingdom. I would like to remind the distinguished representative of the United States that we both have long memories with regard to the issue of negative security assurances, and we are aware that the difficulty on negative security assurances is not so much with regard to the precise wording of the mandate, that it has to do with the substantive positions of some of the nuclear-weapon States. Therefore, I think that the issues raised about the mandate perhaps are an afterthought, because if you see the document that was submitted by the Western Group, document CD/1434, on page 2, second paragraph, it says "ad hoc committees could be set up immediately on negative security assurances, outer space and transparency in armaments," and I underline "immediately"; this was on 11 September 1996. I think therefore, that, it is not too early to take the decision. The paragraph goes on to say "the mandates for the ad hoc committees could be updated." It does not say that the establishment of these ad hoc committees is conditional on updating those mandates. In other words, we set up the ad hoc committees immediately and we update the mandates. This is precisely what has been proposed with regard to the ad hoc committee on negative security assurances, precisely the position of the Western Group on 11 September 1996. Therefore, if my colleague from the United Kingdom wants to have a clear idea of what we are deciding on, it is this proposal and if he wishes to have it in written form, it is in CD/1462, paragraph 1, subparagraph III, which says the Conference on Disarmament decides to establish "an ad hoc committee for agenda item 4, 'Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons'," and here, if it will be the situation, we could add that the mandate of the ad hoc committee as contained in document CD/1121 could be updated. These are the words of the Western Group, "could be updated", and we hope and we trust that there will be no objection to this proposition and therefore, Madam President, for the third time this morning I

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

would request you to put to the Conference whether there is any objection to the establishment of the ad hoc committee on negative security assurances in the terms which I have just proposed.

Mr. MOHER (Canada): I am sorry our question has provoked such a debate. There are two dimensions to this question: one is the process that we are using, and the second is the substance of each individual point. My friend, Munir Akram, challenged me earlier to answer his question and, since I fear his gentle persuasion, I would like to answer it.

On substance, without getting into the details, Canada has no difficulty recognizing that we agreed to the Western Group paper of last September, with the associated statement that we like to see cited every now and then, as in Canada's statement in January and the associated paper with it and in our statement in May with the paper that was circulated officially, whereby we refer to negative security assurances as a possible subject of work in this Conference. We have no problem with the substance of that issue. So, therefore, turning this into some kind of a credibility or integrity test I find a little bit questionable. The point that I addressed earlier, which initiated this debate, was one of process. In taking this course of action, a series of seven or more questions being put one after the other with "yes/no" answers. Are we being conscious of the fact that we are both taking priority decisions and resource decisions, both for the Conference and for our individual delegations? And, secondly, are we clear in our mind that we are establishing a mechanism with a mandate? For Canada's part, we are strongly opposed to the idea of establishing mechanisms without mandates. We think that is a recipe for futility.

On the basis of the discussion that has taken place here, the answer for many delegations is "yes, we think this deserves priority; yes, we are prepared to devote the resources; yes, we want a mechanism, an ad hoc committee, and yes, we are satisfied with the mandate in CD/1121 of 1992, which needs to be updated but we are willing to work with it". Now, if that is the question that is being put, if this Conference as a conference - this is from Canada's perspective only - feels that it has answered the question of priority, resources, mechanism and mandate, to the point that this Conference is comfortable with that, Canada on substance has no difficulties with negative security assurances being addressed in the CD. And Canada agrees. So I am answering the question put by my friend from Pakistan. But what I want to be absolutely clear about is that we are going to apply the same test as we go through the rest of the questions that are put. We agree on priority, on resources, on mechanism and on mandate and we agree that even though mandates that exist may need updating, we are prepared to take a decision today to proceed on the basis of the mandates that exist.

So, in sum, if the question, as Ambassador Akram put it, is: is Canada prepared to accept the establishment of an ad hoc committee to deal with negative security assurances on the basis of CD/1121, our answer is, if this Conference as a whole feels that that meets the test that I have put up, Canada does not object. But I do question whether we are in fact doing ourselves a service by going through this kind of very simplistic and abbreviated exercise.

Ms. GHOSE (India): Madam President, I am sorry to keep taking the floor again and again. I come from the same parliamentary tradition as at least two of the speakers, and we have an excellent vehicle in our tradition which is normally called filibustering: we can come up with all kinds of issues and questions when we know we do not want to take a decision and we will look at the clock and it will be 12 o'clock and then 1 o'clock and the interpreters will say that time is up, and we will have got by without taking a decision, without anybody having said actually what they feel. We all have doubts, we have doubts about a lot of processes, but I think the issue really before us is clear. And I would like to say to the delegate of France that I am aware of the voting on the General Assembly resolution that I quoted: there were none against it, nobody opposed, and there were a large number of abstentions. But the General Assembly resolution was adopted with a huge majority and with nobody opposing it, which is why I quoted it. If it had had people against it, maybe I would not have quoted it.

Now, let me get back to what we are talking about. This is not a question of priority. If the G-21 had said - and it is not true we did, "We place before this house for decision CD/1462 as a whole, that's it", then we would have been told, "No, no, these are linkages; you are putting a package forward; you go element by element". When the G-21 coordinator spoke today, he said on behalf of all of us that this is without prejudice to our priority. Our priority, and let there be no doubt about it, is the immediate establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. We have even proposed a mandate formally, in writing. But, given our effort to try and get a decision on this last day of this part of the session, we felt that the Sri Lankan approach of getting an agreement in the CD on an issue where it appeared that the Western Group and the G-21 were agreed would have been the easiest way forward. Clearly it is not. We're talking of priorities. No, this is not my priority. My priority is an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament with the mandate which is contained in document CD/1463.

But I have agreed to move with this Conference to try and find areas where there is a possibility of agreement. And we felt that on NSAs there is a possibility of agreement. And we have spent two hours in saying, "We agree with you, but we don't agree with you". Alright, if we don't agree on that, let's have this out. There is no agreement because there are some countries - I've got a list of five countries, but one country is sufficient - which object. So let us get on to the next one. And the next one is "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". And I presume we will go through the next one hour on PAROS. After we have finished PAROS, presumably we will then reconvene in the afternoon. And we will go to the third one. If you wish, and if that is the desire of those who have objected to the proposal of an ad hoc committee on NSAs, we will then present the entire thing as a package. And if anybody uses the word linkage, I don't know what I will do, but ...

I am very serious. We deliberately said this is not an issue on which we wish to make linkages. We did not seek to make any linkage or blockage when the landmine decision went through. We are now saying, here is one area on which there was agreement. There's been no opposition either in the

(Ms. Ghose, India)

General Assembly, and there's been a positive recommendation coming from the Western Group. That recommendation was picked up by the G-21. Maybe we should have objected. And maybe then we would have got an agreement. The G-21 perhaps should not agree so easily. I think, if it is clear that there is objection, let that be down on the record, and let us get on to PAROS.

Mr. ZEMSKOV (Russian Federation)(translated from Russian): The Russian delegation welcomes the decision taken yesterday on the appointment of a Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines. We feel that that decision is of fundamental importance from the point of view of the approaches and way of working in this forum. Accordingly, we view what the distinguished Ambassador of Sri Lanka has proposed regarding the way in which we should proceed on the other items of a possible programme of work as contributing towards improving our work and making it more effective. In our opinion, everything that has happened in our Conference so far and that has led the Conference into something of an impasse as regards the organization of its work is the consequence of the very misguided practice of establishing linkages and package decisions. Now we see encouraging signs of a move away from that practice and we very much hope that we shall not lose our momentum with respect to the further resolution of all the questions that are before us and that really are ripe for practical decision-making. The Russian delegation, as coordinator of the Eastern European Group, takes up the challenge to the Group thrown down by the distinguished Ambassador of India on the question what has been and is the Group's position on the issues now being discussed. I confirm, on the basis of the information available to me, that during the past year in all the discussions, in informal consultations and presidential consultations alike, the coordinators of the Eastern European Group have always stated that the Group had a flexible position on re-establishing existing ad hoc committees with the mandates they had at the time. As I understand it, and now I am speaking on behalf of the Russian delegation, our Conference is a living organism that evolves and that can envisage making changes in its working methods and in the substance of the issues it discusses. I think that my reply gives a pretty clear picture of our position on the question that we are talking about today.

Mr. BAIDI-NEJAD (Islamic Republic of Iran): Madam President, congratulations on your assumption of the presidency and on the way you are conducting the work of the Conference at this very important juncture. We especially express our gratitude to you that you led the discussions on the appointment of a Special Coordinator on landmines to a successful conclusion.

It seems from the discussions that we have had till now that we can judge that there is no objection to the establishment of an ad hoc committee on negative security assurances. The question has been raised whether we should establish the ad hoc committee together with a mandate or can have an ad hoc committee without a mandate. The question also has been raised what should be the mandate and which document we should have as the basis for the mandate of the ad hoc committee; document CD/1121 especially has been referred to. The distinguished Ambassadors of China and Pakistan have announced that they can go along with that mandate. My delegation also can go along with the mandate in that document.

(Mr. Baidi-Nejad, Islamic Republic of Iran)

But I think in this kind of discussion we should bear in mind that this plenary has been convened to take up a decision on the proposal put forward by Sri Lanka yesterday. We have heard comments on how it is inelegant to put a question of yes or no to this decision. My delegation can agree with that, but I think we have now gone beyond elegance, and the main concern in the CD now is to activate the CD to enter into serious negotiations. I think that procedurally we are discussing the proposal formally put forward by the distinguished Ambassador of Sri Lanka. I think that the first question put forward by the distinguished Ambassador of Sri Lanka maybe needs to be more clear at this stage, whether it's an ad hoc committee without a mandate or a mandate based on document CD/1121 or whatever else, but I think this point should be clarified by the distinguished Ambassador of Sri Lanka. He has put forward the proposal, and I think at this stage we should request him kindly to make it more clear. But at this stage it is absolutely necessary to put that question to the CD for a decision.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): My delegation has contributed to the debate this morning in the most positive manner possible: it has remained silent. Of course, my delegation has doubts about the wisdom of the procedure that is being proposed by the representative of Sri Lanka, but my delegation defends the right of the representative of Sri Lanka to make proposals and to require the Conference to decide on them. Of course, like Canada, we have doubts regarding the priorities and the resources allocated. Unlike Canada, we expressed those doubts at the time of the appointment of the coordinator on landmines. For my delegation there is no doubt about what the representative of Sri Lanka proposed: I listened to him very carefully, and the distinguished representative of Pakistan said it. The representative of Sri Lanka proposes that we take a decision as we see it in document CD/1462, paragraph 1, subparagraph III: (continued in English) "The Conference on Disarmament decides to establish an ad hoc committee for agenda item 4, 'Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons'". (continued in Spanish) I wonder, as India did, why we have taken two and a quarter hours repeating the debate that we had yesterday when you have put a specific question to the Conference and the question was whether there is any opposition. Since we have yet to hear any, I suggest, Madam President, that you bang the gavel and state that the Conference adopts this proposal, and that we move on to the next one.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): We agreed yesterday, after very long and sometimes painstaking discussion, on a Special Coordinator on landmines. We welcome this decision, particularly since we succeeded in this decision in giving clear terms of reference to Ambassador Campbell about what he is supposed to do. We hope that we have created a momentum which we will be able to maintain, as I said yesterday in my statement. I mentioned a number of issues which might be addressed, because we clearly feel that the issue of landmines should not be the only item we are addressing. Now, the distinguished representative of Sri Lanka has taken the initiative and proposed a number of items on which we are now being asked to decide. You mentioned first the issue of negative security assurances and the establishment of an ad hoc committee. My delegation has no problems on

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

substance with this issue. A number of delegations, however, have, and they rightly raised the question what would be the terms of reference of such a committee, since also even in the case of a Special Coordinator on landmines we have given terms of reference; so the question what terms of reference, what mandate such a committee would have is a justified one.

Now we have heard in this room different views on whether we should establish a committee without terms of reference, without a mandate, or with a mandate, and document CD/1121 was mentioned. Other delegations have raised doubts whether we should proceed on the basis of this mandate. Clearly, we could take a decision now, but we would find ourselves in a situation in which we would have a committee but we would have some differences, and maybe profound differences, on what this committee is supposed to do. So, we are asking ourselves, while wishing to move ahead with other substantive issues which this Conference should address, whether this would be the wisest way to proceed. And therefore I wonder whether it would not be useful that you, Madam President, have informal consultations on how we should proceed, consultations to clarify some of the issues - whether we should establish a committee with or without a mandate, and if with a mandate, as a number of delegations have suggested, which mandate that should be - so that we would have a more solid basis on which we should proceed. Of course, we could now go through this discussion on all the other items, perhaps until tonight, and my delegation is clearly ready to do so, but I think it might be useful if we have some further informal discussion on this matter in order to be in the same position as we were yesterday when we could agree without major difficulties and chart a clear path on which the future work of the CD should proceed.

Mr. BERGUÑO (Chile) (translated from Spanish): This question is of historic importance for the Conference on Disarmament. It is a subject that has been put in its context and considerable efforts have been made to achieve the objective in the mandate contained in the document that has been mentioned. When the Committee was not re-established, the reasons might have been - to look at the matter from one point of view - that it had not made any substantial progress in fulfilling its mandate. But in fact it was not re-established because of an order of priorities that led us to work more intensively and to devote all the Conference's resources to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. That Treaty has been concluded and its provisional regime is in force, that is to say, there is a provisional secretariat. The matter is, in a sense, one that has been left pending, but not pending as regards negotiations. The reasons that existed for suspending some of the committees exist no longer. It is true that in each case we have to take a careful decision with regard to resources and the intention. My delegation has no doubt about the resources, about the intention, or about the priority where this subject is concerned. It seems to us a subject of enormous importance. We know that there are other forums in which this question can be tackled in part, in the NPT review process, in the discussions on nuclear-weapon-free zones within the Disarmament Commission, but none of those forums has the broad mandate of reaching a multilateral agreement that is one of the fundamental objectives of the comprehensive programme of disarmament, one of the fundamental objectives of the new balance now that the cold war is

(Mr. Berguño, Chile)

over, one of the fundamental objectives of harmonizing and complementing nuclear disarmament agreements and, above all, non-proliferation agreements with a system that would guarantee the rights of States that have resolved not to have nuclear weapons and to eliminate them from all parts of the Earth or at least to eliminate them from their own territories and areas of jurisdiction, and to have these full assurances in multilateral, effective, uniform terms. I think there is no doubt about this, so if somebody has doubts on the subject it is because they have doubts about the objective. The objective has not been achieved in this forum but it is clearly in this forum that the discussion must take place. So, at the moment of truth, the time to give an answer, this is the answer that must be given. Is this mandate a topical one? It is as topical as can be, the fundamental mandate of the day, and so, on this understanding, my delegation has no doubt that this Conference should reply in the affirmative and act at this session.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Madam President, my reason for taking the floor is to, perhaps, make an appeal - I wouldn't like to say a point of order, but make an appeal that you respond to the proposal of the Group of 21, of Sri Lanka, of Pakistan, which has not been objected to, to take a decision to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances. We have not heard any objection to this proposal. Questions have been raised with regard to the mandate. We believe that it should be re-established with the previous mandate, but we are prepared to have an understanding that that mandate can be updated. I think that is quite natural, reasonable. But there is no objection to the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee, and I am a little puzzled why we have spent two and a half hours on a discussion where no one has so far objected to the re-establishment of this Ad Hoc Committee.

So I would appeal to you to put the proposal to the Conference for its approval and that proposal has been clearly stated. And if there is no objection, let us take a decision to establish or re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security. That's my plea and my appeal to you, Madam President, in all fairness.

Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka): Madam President, since I am responsible for this lively debate, let me try to bring it to a conclusion, if it is possible, at least on this specific subject. When you asked the question yesterday, or at least requested my delegation to repeat the question or the proposal I put forward, I very clearly stated, or used the word, "re-establishment" of ad hoc committees on x, y and z. That is, specifically speaking of NSA, outer space and TIA. Then I went on to say that, in the case of nuclear disarmament, it is not re-establishment but it is establishment of an ad hoc committee. This morning, when you opened the plenary, you asked the question with regard to the NSA ad hoc committee, and you also referred to the mandate contained in CD/1121. And of course I think the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan and several others referred to CD/1134, which stated that the mandate could be adapted, before which there was a clear reference that at least three ad hoc committees could be established immediately. The Ambassador of Pakistan said that ad hoc committees could be set up immediately on negative security assurances, outer space and on transparency in armaments. The mandates for the ad hoc committees could be updated. Now, on the basis of

(Mr. Goonetilleke, Sri Lanka)

this, may I ask you, Madam, to inquire from the Conference whether there is an objection to establishing an ad hoc committee or re-establishing the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances on the basis of the mandate contained in CD/1121 of 22 January 1992, on the understanding that the Ad Hoc Committee could update its mandate. If you want I can read it slowly once again: "Whether there is an objection to the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances on the basis of the mandate contained in CD/1121, of 22 January 1992, on the understanding that the Ad Hoc Committee could update its mandate".

In conclusion, Madam President, it is not the decision to establish an ad hoc committee or the mandate itself which will facilitate our work. It is only the good will and the desire of all members that will facilitate such work. One such example is the Ad Hoc Committee which we established on "cut-off" two years ago with a mandate, and we all know what happened to that committee. And I hope we will be able to take a decision on that matter as well. So we can have ad hoc committees, we can have mandates, still there could be no work. So I would like to stress once again what is important here is the good will and the desire of all of us to work together.

Mr. RAMAKER (Netherlands): Madam President, like others, I would like to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference, and congratulate you and the Conference on the decision that we took yesterday with regard to a Special Coordinator on APL.

Like Ambassador de Icaza of Mexico, I thought that this morning I could best be helpful if I did not say anything at all because this is a rather time-consuming exercise. But like a few others in this hall, I have been here before, a long time ago, and I am sometimes a little bit concerned about the way this Conference nowadays tries to solve the issues that it has before it. If your question would have been this morning whether we are ready to take a decision on the establishment or re-establishment of an ad hoc committee on negative security assurances, I think by now the answer should be clear. Apparently, we are not ready. Why are we not ready? Because I think this decision has not been thoroughly prepared. Now, I think it was always a good tradition in this Conference that decisions were thoroughly prepared before they were taken.

We are having here this kind of discussion this morning in a formal plenary - and what is the difference between a formal plenary and an informal set-up? First of all, we have interpretation here; that costs money, but it has been budgeted. But I am a little bit concerned, given the length of the debate, by what it is the Secretariat has to do. First of all, this whole debate has to be elaborated, has to be typed out from the tapes, then it has to be translated into six languages, and the cost involved is just staggering, I think. It seems to me that, if we go on like this, we should do this in some sort of an informal set-up and then come back and resume and take the decision in the formal plenary. Like we used to do. And like we did until recently. So really what I wanted to say is this: I think we need some more preparation before we make any decisions. This is not a way of trying to prolong a process, but it is meant as advice and I am in sympathy with what

(Mr. Ramaker, Netherlands)

Ambassador Seibert of Germany said: that some informal consultations seem to be in order before we proceed to the actual decision-making. And, like many others, I am grateful for the clarification given by our distinguished colleague from Sri Lanka. I am in complete sympathy, my delegation is in complete sympathy with continuing work on negative security assurances, on outer space and on the question of transparency in armaments, three issues that have been before this Conference before. So it is not a matter of delaying, it is simply a matter of really thinking about how are we going to solve the issues that are before us today in the best possible manner - and, I might add, in the most cost-effective manner.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Frencn): I thank the representative of the Netherlands for his statement. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor? Since that is not the case, allow me to sum up our discussion a little. Some delegations have requested that the question of the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Negative Security Assurances be officially submitted to the Conference for approval. Others have expressed certain doubts concerning the most appropriate method of making a decision on the proposal by the representative of Sri Lanka, and have requested that consultations be continued. One delegation has said it is not ready to make a decision. Questions have been asked about the Committee's mandate. We have three possible approaches: (a) We can re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on Negative Security Guarantees with the mandate contained in document CD/1121; (b) We have the possibility of re-establishing the Ad Hoc Committee without a mandate; (c) We have the possibility of re-establishing the Ad Hoc Committee after defining its mandate. I was ready to put the question as it was presented by Sri Lanka, but after the discussion that we have had this morning, I think that we must first resolve the question of the procedure we should follow. I would like to stress that I consider the proposal by Sri Lanka legitimate. Personally, I would prefer to continue to hold informal consultations to resolve the problems before us, but since there is no consensus in the Conference on that, I would like to ask the question as the representative of Sri Lanka worded it. I give the floor to the representative of Iran.

Mr. BAIDI-NEJAD (Islamic Republic of Iran): Madam President, I can go along with your last sentence - that you want to put to a decision the proposal by Sri Lanka, but I need to make it clear that my delegation can go into informal consultations only after we have made a decision on the proposal by Sri Lanka.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): My position is identical to that of Iran. There is a formal proposal that has to be put to the Conference. We have heard no objections. We would like to put that proposal to the Conference for a decision. After that, we can decide what we can do later.

Mr. BERGUÑO (Chile) (translated from Spanish): Madam President, we appreciate your conduct of the discussion and the way you have dealt with its diversity and complexity. We are in full agreement with the previous speakers. We think that this is the procedure. The question must be formulated strictly in the terms used by the initiator of this procedure. If the answer is not unanimous, if it is not concordant, then, indeed, we will have to consider what the next course of action is.

Mr. SHA (China) (translated from Chinese): Madam President, the Chinese delegation would like to appeal to you to respond impartially to the demands and appeals from the relevant delegations. We hope that you will carry out the proper function of the presidency. Take action first, then decide whether to conduct informal consultations. In order to save time, I will now speak English.

(continued in English)

Although I don't like the idea, I should like to launch a protest at the way business was conducted today. I should therefore like to appeal to you to exercise your responsibilities in conformity with the rules of procedure of the Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of China for his statement and since there are no more speakers, I should like to repeat in English the proposal made by the representative of Sri Lanka.

(continued in English):

Is there an objection to the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Negative Security Assurances on the basis of the mandate contained in CD/1121 dated 22 January 1992, on the understanding that the Committee could update its mandate?

Mr. RAMAKER (Netherlands): Madam President, if you would put this question to the Conference in the way it is phrased now, I am afraid that I would have to object, because I do not think that it is up to an ad hoc committee to define its own mandate. Mandates are given by the Conference to ad hoc committees. And I am afraid that in the way it is phrased now, that practice would be violated.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Like my colleague from the Netherlands, I have been here before. And I think that the process for updating of mandates has been varied. It has been done in various modalities; mechanisms have been followed to evolve the mandates, including certain efforts by the ad hoc committees themselves, if you recall the nuclear-test-ban discussions. But if the distinguished representative of the Netherlands would be obliged to object to your question, Madam President, on procedural grounds, I am sure that we would help him overcome the procedural difficulties by a slight modification of the question that you may wish to put to the Conference. Instead of saying that the committee would update the mandate, we could just say "on the

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

understanding that the Conference could update the mandate subsequently". I think with that slight modification Ambassador Ramaker would not find this difficult to accept.

Mr. SHA (China) (translated from Chinese): My view is already reflected in the statement by the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan, so I will just give you back the floor.

Mr. BERGUÑO (Chile) (translated from Spanish): I think there is not really any objection on this point. It is clear that the committees can, in the analysis of their mandates, and the review of their work, make proposals on those matters to the Conference. The formula proposed by the Ambassador of Pakistan in that regard is faultless. It does, of course, suppose that it is the committee itself that will carry out this work. People like Ambassador Ramaker who are long-standing members of the Conference on Disarmament know better than we who are newer how this is done. That is certainly not an objection to the question as formulated by Sri Lanka and the idea is that, with a sound, permanent mandate, namely the objective of working on an international instrument, and given the circumstances, the climate, the fact that complementary work is going on in other forms too, it may be of interest for this mandate gradually to be refined, polished, amended, improved. And I think no delegation would have any problems with that.

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): First of all, I would like to thank the previous speakers, in particular Mexico, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and China, for the spirit of compromise and cooperation which they have shown today and to thank them too for the welcome clarification concerning the question now before us.

Madam President, you have asked a question and it is to that question that I am going to reply, it being understood that if the wording of the question were to be changed we would be prepared to reply to it as well, but it seems to me that the discussion now taking place shows that there is clearly a need for some additional consultations. My country considers it a somewhat unfortunate precedent that we are faced with a purely oral decision that it has not been possible to have communicated in writing or in particular, and you will understand in what spirit I say this, translated into French. Nevertheless, in a spirit of cooperation I will not, at the risk of being severely reprimanded by my capital, dwell on that objection. I would like to say that France wants to think some more and in a constructive spirit about the proposal by Sri Lanka. At the time, it is true that since 1992 fundamental developments have occurred in this area. My capital has not yet come to a definitive decision as to how those changes could be reflected. Therefore, France is not in a position today, and I stress "today", to make an immediate decision on this proposal. To preserve today's momentum and the constructive atmosphere of this meeting and the initial results constituted by today's plenary meeting, I respectfully suggest that the proposal made by Sri Lanka and read by you, Madam President, should be put into writing and translated so that we can send it to our capital and also begin consultations on it after we have finished replying to Sri Lanka's questions. France therefore adds a second objection to that of the Netherlands.

Mr. TAUWHARE (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Madam President, in responding to the question you put as you put it, I fully share the objections raised by the distinguished Representative of the Netherlands. Just looking at the rules of procedures, I see that rule 23 states "the Conference shall define the mandate of each of such subsidiary bodies", so that point is clear. My Government would like to note that we seem to be shooting at a moving target here. The proposal, as I reported it to the authorities last night - and perhaps I misunderstood it, but I took it down as being the wording from document CD/1462 - is this: the Conference on Disarmament decides to establish an ad hoc committee for agenda item 4, and then the title of the agenda item with no mandate, no reference to document CD/1121, nor any reference to understandings about changing the mandate. So that is the proposal that I sought instructions on. Since then, we have been told that CD/1121 should be added to the question. So we were deciding to establish an ad hoc committee with the mandate in CD/1121. Since then, we have also added this idea that the mandate might be updated by the Ad Hoc Committee itself and subsequently, in the last five minutes, we have had another suggestion that perhaps the Ad Hoc Committee should start meeting on one mandate, whilst the Conference discussed its mandate and then perhaps changed it. I am sorry, Madam President, but I really do not think this is a very serious way to proceed. We have addressed these questions in good faith. In principle, we are wanting to move forward, but to do so we need to be clear what it is we are trying to do. So I would support those who have suggested that you convene informal consultations to clarify what it is we are trying to decide on. And then we will try to come back and try to decide on it.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): I must confess that not much surprises me in this Conference, and I am quite used to the shifting positions of delegations, but I believe that reasons that we have heard in the past few minutes have set a new benchmark for the kind of twists and turns to which we are becoming more and more accustomed in the Conference on Disarmament. Some delegations wanted to have things their way. The distinguished representative of France has said that developments have taken place since 1992 which make it necessary for France to reconsider its position on the mandate and the ad hoc committee. We would like to know whether France has taken into account these developments when it subscribed to document CD/1434 asking for the immediate re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Negative Security Assurances. Or are these an afterthought, once we are faced with a moment of truth and we seek to establish the ad hoc committee? I was even more surprised by the response of the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom. I believe that modifications to the Sri Lankan proposal that have been made were designed to accommodate the concerns that were voiced this morning by some of the members of the Western Group. And these modifications were made precisely by the distinguished Ambassador of Sri Lanka and by my delegation, with reference to document CD/1434, in which it is stated that the mandates for the ad hoc committees could be updated. But those committees are to be set up immediately. There is no pre-condition in that proposal that those committees cannot be set up while those mandates are being updated. And if there was a dichotomy and contradiction, then I would submit that this arises from the position of the Western Group and not from the proposal of the distinguished Representative of Sri Lanka, or my own delegation. It is strange that a

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

decision is vetoed by delegations on grounds that have been put forward in order precisely to accommodate their concerns and considerations, to accommodate their position as they have stated formally in this Conference.

The positions that have been addressed today confirm for my delegation that a certain number of nuclear-weapon States are not prepared to give up their unequal privileges which they hold from the possession of nuclear weapons. They are not prepared to give up their right to threaten non-nuclear-weapon States with the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. They are not prepared to abide by the agreements to which they are parties even in this Conference on Disarmament. They are stepping backwards from the assurances that they have given. Formal statements have been made holding out the threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. And the debate this morning, unfortunately, for my delegation confirmed our worst fears with regards to the positions of these States. We will have to review our own position on the items of our agenda. We will review our position and come back to this Conference in the light of that review to see how we should respond to this new situation.

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): I should like to make two points clear after the important statement by the Ambassador of Pakistan. I should first like to say to him, with all the deep respect I have for his position and for him, that I am not sure that he has quite understood a nuance in my statement. I did not say that the mandate and the 1992 decision must be adapted to reflect the new developments that have occurred in the meanwhile. I said that my capital had not yet come to a final decision (continued in English) "if and how" (continued in French) - perhaps I will be understood better in English - that should be done. At the same time, and so that everyone here clearly understands the situation, the commitment entered into by France under document CD/1444 was part of a set of measures. That is why, in the light of today's discussion, my capital wants an opportunity, now that the question being put has been defined, to assess it.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): Madam President very briefly, since it is past 1 p.m. I would like to express my delegation's disappointment at the negative replies to the question raised by the Ambassador of Sri Lanka and the manner in which you defined the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee on assurances for non-nuclear States.

When we adopted the updated mandate of that Committee in 1992, we established the Committee, which existed for several years, with the approval of the French delegation and all the other delegations, because there was a consensus on the adoption of this decision in accordance with the rules of procedure, and that Committee was re-established several times after 1992. I am surprised that the Western Group asked for the re-establishment of that Committee a few months ago, in September 1996, and I also wonder how it officially adopted that position without having any idea of any particular mandate. It took that position, and we accept that voluntarily. These are bewildering questions; some States might lack the political will to establish or re-establish this committee - I don't know. The delegation of Egypt has doubts on this matter and wishes to express its disappointment. We have been

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

discussing this matter for three hours now and we are going round in circles. We are now resorting to some procedural aspects in order to postpone the adoption of a decision on this matter. The question is clear and does not require further clarification.

Ms. CRITTENBERGER (United States of America): Indeed, it is with regret that I take the floor once again this morning, and I have to say that I share the disappointment just expressed by the distinguished Ambassador of Egypt, although perhaps for different reasons. It seems to me that we are faced with a situation that some unfortunately are choosing to interpret in the most negative way possible, and that is indeed regrettable. In fact, it has even led some countries to challenge the treaty obligations and the good faith or bad faith with which they are implemented. This is just really not fair or acceptable. It seems to me that we are in a situation where one set of rules can be applied one day and a different set can be applied the next day. And it seems to me, however, when one defines fairness, we at least need to be consistent. When the question was asked for a decision to appoint a Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines, over the period of at least two, three months we have been debating this issue there were answers: we are not in a position to take a decision, we do not have our instructions, etc. We respected those responses, and indeed it seems to me that what we have here today is a situation where none has objected to establishing a negative security assurances ad hoc committee. But several delegations have said they are not in a position today to take that decision. So if there is an objection, and if it is recorded as an objection, then that needs to go down as a matter on which the authorities have not yet taken a decision. It is quite simple.

Mr. KREID (Austria): We have also come to a conclusion from this debate which does not completely coincide with the interpretation given by the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan. We also fully share his sense of frustration and disappointment because evidently we are under time-pressure and he, like others, would have liked to come to a decision on one of the items under discussion. However, I do want to repeat what has just been stated by the distinguished representative of the United States, namely, there have been no formal objections. There is an element of time, there is an element of consultations with capitals, and I believe that this ought to be respected; and I also trust that we will be able to move on this item in the near future. I do want to register that from the side of those delegations from the Western Group that took the floor this morning and now also during the afternoon. We have not had any objections on substance, but we did not want to be rushed into something that might be reprimanded by capitals. And we wanted to make sure, as is the tradition here in the Conference, that what we decide is plainly known to us and to our superior authorities.

Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka): When the proposal was made yesterday, it was for the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee. Then a question was asked by a delegation or two with regard to the mandate. Now we have covered that aspect. And we have actually gone a step further to accommodate the views of the Western Group, which was favorably disposed towards re-establishing the Ad Hoc Committee on NSA. And I believe that the position

(Mr. Goonetilleke, Sri Lanka)

of that Group has not changed. With regard to the position of France, I respect what was stated, namely that France was not in a position to agree upon the proposal today. I myself remember last week saying that I have had no instruction from the capital with regard to landmines. And taking into consideration the fact we all have to consult our capitals with regard to new decisions. And if a delegation asks for time, I think we have to concede to them and permit them to have consultations and obtain instructions. And once again, I sincerely believe that, since this proposal comes from that particular delegation and it accommodates the position of that delegation with regard to the mandate, I really do not see any problem with regard to the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee with the proposed mandate. The question is what are we going to do next and how are we going to do it. I hope we will be able to use the remaining few minutes to consider those aspects.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Sri Lanka. It is now 1.15 and I should like to ask speakers kindly to be as brief as possible because I still have four speakers on my list. I give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

Mr. FASEHUN (Nigeria): Madam President, we had kept quiet, believing that silence is golden and that you may be able to walk your way through these procedural difficulties. But it seems that, in statements made which alluded to a decision of yesterday, the length of time it took to arrive at that decision is being used to justify what seems to us another blockage. APLs came to this house five months ago, NSA has been effectively in this house for years and what was proposed or what is being proposed is indeed what was known. What we have gone through before was to lift language from a Western Group document. Unless, of course, there has been a radical shift in position between September 1996 and June 1997? If that is the case, we want it to be stated clearly. Thirdly, there is a difference between APLs and the issue of security assurances. Therefore, we do not accept the statement that, when it was convenient for certain delegations, they used the assertion that they were waiting for instructions. We do not accept that argument, because APLs came to the CD for the first time this year as far as we are concerned. And from the records available here, NSA has been with us for years.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): I will be brief, Madam President, and I thank you for giving me the floor again. First, my delegation is not disappointed. We did not expect positive replies to the seven or eight questions that the representative of Sri Lanka asked; it was not logical to expect that. Second, my delegation respects the reasons procedural or of substance that any delegation may have for opposing something. There has been opposition. My delegation hopes that this afternoon we will begin consideration of the second proposal of the distinguished representative of Nigeria and that we don't again get involved in a debate as to whether the Ambassador of Sri Lanka has the right or sufficient wisdom to do what he is doing. So please, I think that these last 15 minutes were very positive. You, Madam President, asked the question, objection was voiced, and that's that. We need to consult further on this subject. Let us go on to the next proposal.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): I shall be brief. I am disappointed, and this is perhaps because I do not have the wisdom of the distinguished Ambassador of Mexico, with his long experience. But I cannot disguise the fact that I am disappointed that the Conference has not been able to take a positive decision on a matter on which apparently there is no disagreement. But then, as I said, we continue to be surprised, particularly by the position of certain Powers. I will not speak about fairness, because I think we do not deal with fairness in this Conference. But I must say that we have heard some very strange arguments today and very strange procedural objections which would not bear critical examination. Among other things, I would like to take note of the fact that the demand for linkage has been revived, and not from the Group of 21. And this is, of course, a notable development in our proceedings today. I would like to suggest, Madam President, that we still have six other questions from the proposal of Sri Lanka, but we should reconvene perhaps slightly after 3 p.m. this afternoon and take up those issues and spend as short a time as possible on each of them, so that we can get through those six questions and any others that anyone may wish to pose, so that we can establish the credibility of this Conference and the credibility of those members who question the credibility of this Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Pakistan. The representative of Sri Lanka asked questions and won the support of a large number of delegations, but the debate has shown that there are delegations which are not ready to take decisions today and which need a little time and are asking for informal consultations to be held. There has been a request to continue the plenary this afternoon. I would ask the question whether it would really be effective to resume the plenary this afternoon or whether we should proceed to informal consultations. I call on the representative of Mexico.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Madam President, your question surprises me. There are seven proposals on the table and a delegation has asked this Conference to decide on them before entering into any informal consultations. The stand by that delegation has been supported by a group that constitutes half of this Conference. I cannot see why we should now be asked to enter into informal consultations. We do not agree to that, Madam. We want answers to the questions put by the Ambassador of Sri Lanka. That is to say, we want the Conference to decide on these proposals. Obviously, if there is no agreement on any one of them, we shall have to decide, then, how to proceed. Not before.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Mexico. I am going to suspend this plenary meeting and we will resume it at 3 p.m.

The meeting was suspended at 1.25 p.m. and resumed at 3.45 p.m.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The 770th plenary meeting is resumed. The debate this morning showed that certain delegations need a little more time to take a decision about the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Negative Security Assurances. I thought it would be reasonable to hold informal consultations this afternoon so as to avoid a repetition of this morning's situation, but one delegation has asked me to resume the plenary meeting immediately. I am therefore going to ask straight away, one after another, the questions proposed by the representative of Sri Lanka. The second part of the session ends this afternoon and we have to go through all the components of the Sri Lankan proposal. Consequently, I would ask you to be as brief, as precise and as practical as possible in your reactions so that we can move ahead in our work. After consultation, it seems that it would be useful to begin our meeting with the proposals concerning the three special coordinators. Before I ask the first question, the representative of Austria would like to take the floor. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. KREID (Austria): Madam President, in a way, in your wisdom, you anticipated my intervention, so I can be really very brief. Mainly to express our preference, if we proceed now with the list in front of you, to reverse the order and to give us a chance to deal first with issues that might be easier to get an agreement on. So it is simply what you yourself had been proposing, but when I asked for the floor I was not aware you would do it.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Austria. So, I will put the questions concerning the appointment of special coordinators. Is there agreement to appoint a special coordinator on the question of the expansion of the membership of the Conference?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): Is there agreement to appoint a special coordinator on review of the agenda of the Conference?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): The representative of Ireland would like the floor. Ireland has the floor.

Mr. HANNEY (Ireland): Madam, on behalf of this delegation, we congratulate you on your arrival in the office of CD President and on the successes you have already achieved. We would like to thank the Conference for the decision to appoint a Special Coordinator on CD expansion. However, we would recall that at the outset of the current year under the presidency of Ambassador Sun, during his opening statement to the first plenary session of the CD, he did remark that a consensus had emerged on the appointment of a Special Coordinator. So, in fact, today I think the CD is just formally recognizing a consensus which already existed in January 1997. In fact, the problem as we all know is finding someone to fill this vacant slot. We noted yesterday the remarkable speed with which the CD managed to identify a Special Coordinator on APLs, and we congratulate the Australian delegation on the appointment of Ambassador Campbell. However, this remarkable speed is in

(Mr. Hanney, Ireland)

sharp contrast to the very long delay in filling the coordinatorship on expansion. We would urge the CD that by the opening of the third part of the session in 1997 it have a name for this Special Coordinator. In this context, we note that in regard to some of the other slots that have been proposed for Special Coordinators, names are already swirling around this chamber. And perhaps these slots are close to being filled. So we would urge the CD to take a rapid decision on the appointment of the Special Coordinator on expansion.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Ireland for his statement and I can assure him that I will continue consultations to find the person who can be appointed to this post. I give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): In quick consultations, which unfortunately did not include everyone, some delegations, among them my own, exerted strong and effective pressure on the distinguished representative of Austria and he is willing to serve. We congratulate him on this and I formally propose that the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Austria be the Coordinator on expansion.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): Is this proposal acceptable to all delegations?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I congratulate Ambassador Harald Kreid on his appointment and I wish him luck. I give the floor to Ambassador Kreid of Austria.

Mr. KREID (Austria): It is easy: if you start with "A", you have a good chance to be discovered first as a Coordinator. But apart from this, I am told that this is one of the longest, if not the longest, plenary in the history of the CD, but it seems to have been the quickest decision on a Coordinator, because I just heard of it two minutes ago and I was unable to really reflect and consider all the burden that goes with it. However, I tell you frankly, I did not feel that I could say no for the single reason that we are among those countries that were recently accepted in the CD, and I feel it as a kind of a duty and also as a privilege, of course, to be entrusted with this rather difficult question. I would like to thank all of you for the trust you have shown in approving this nomination and I would also like to thank the Ambassador of Mexico; maybe at this moment I can say that in all sincerity, maybe after some experience in this job I will come back with other opinions.

Mr. MANOUSSAKIS (Greece): I was going to ask for the floor to express my full support for the views expressed by the distinguished representative of Ireland on the need of appointing a Special Coordinator, but now, since a decision has been taken, I would like just to wish much success to the Special Coordinator.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Greece for his statement. Is there agreement to appoint a Special Coordinator on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): My consultations indicate that the candidacy of Ambassador Zahran of Egypt for this post would be acceptable. Is that proposal acceptable to all delegations?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I congratulate Ambassador Zahran and I wish him good luck in his task. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Ms. CRITTENBERGER (United States of America): I am delighted that we have been able to take these three decisions and to nominate two individuals to serve. I would like to propose for the decision on review of the agenda that we also nominate a Special Coordinator today and I should like to suggest that Ambassador Náray of Hungary be nominated to serve in that capacity.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the United States of America. I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt and then I will come back to the proposal made by the representative of the United States.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): I would like to express my satisfaction at the way these questions have been dealt with, as well as my gratitude to all those who supported my appointment, in my capacity as the representative of Egypt, as the Special Coordinator to increase the effectiveness of the Conference on Disarmament. In fact, the Egyptian delegation would have welcomed the assignment of this task to any other Ambassador. However, I was called upon to undertake it. I will carry out my tasks with the cooperation of all my colleagues. We need to look at the procedures and how we can improve the effectiveness of the Conference in future in order to avoid crises within the Conference with regard to its work. I will undoubtedly benefit from the previous work done on this subject because, since 1995, the question of improving the effectiveness of the Conference has not been taken up. I thank you, Madam President, and all my colleagues who have expressed confidence in me. I promise you that I will cooperate with you in an objective and impartial manner on this matter.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Egypt, Ambassador Zahran, for his statement. We have a proposal made by the representative of the United States of America for the appointment as Special Coordinator on the review of the agenda of Ambassador Náray of Hungary. Is that proposal acceptable to all delegations?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I congratulate Ambassador Náray on his appointment. I wish him good luck in his task and give him the floor.

Mr. NÁRAY (Hungary): I have just arrived in the room and I see that things develop quite fast today and yesterday. Of course, I am honoured by this very interesting task, and I shall certainly try to do my best in order to maintain the momentum with which we have started now. And therefore, with your help, hopefully I can do this job.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank Ambassador Náray for his statement. I hope that the spirit of cooperation that now prevails will continue. I give the floor to the Ambassador of India.

Ms. GHOSE (India): This time I will speak, having ceded the floor earlier, because, apart from congratulating the three Ambassadors who have just been appointed as Special Coordinators, I think I need to spell out, on behalf of my delegation, something on the mandate for the three Coordinators, just some suggestions that we would like to put before them.

On the issue of the expansion of the CD, we feel that the Special Coordinator should also look at the structure and effectiveness of the CD. I know that there is a Special Coordinator to look after the improved and effective functioning of the CD as it now exists, but we would like Ambassador Kreid to bear this in mind when looking at the idea of expansion.

The second point which I would like to make, and this is the suggestion, is that we have in the last expansion treated all the countries who had applied as a group. I think it would be, in my view, more helpful if we did it on an individual basis of individual countries. We have also in the past talked about the need for a balance in the CD and I think that that is also a necessary point to be borne in mind by the Special Coordinator.

On the agenda, we had already agreed and given Ambassador Hocine Meghlaoui a mandate about updating the agenda. This year, as you are aware, we have adopted last year's agenda. But what I would like to say is that, in the refining and updating of the agenda, the priorities of the CD need to be kept in mind. We do not expect to see an updating which would ignore the priorities which have already been established, but anything which is out of date would certainly have to be looked at.

On the third Special Coordinator, I would ask the Ambassador of Egypt to be kind enough to look at how we can have a better seating arrangement in this room. Frankly, I think a lot of our problems this year have arisen from the fact that we are not talking to each other at all. Not that when we talk to each other we get very far, but I think that there is something to be said about this room not being terribly conducive to negotiating. We are supposed to be a negotiating body, and I think this is one issue. It is quite serious: we keep saying we should go to Room 1 when we have something serious to discuss. But we know that Room 1 is too small now for us, so we would have to make use of this chamber with interpretation, but find a way in which we retain our character of being a negotiating body.

(Ms. Ghose, India)

That is all I want to say at the moment. I am not quite sure whether there is a need to give specific mandates. I just made these proposals in the hope that the Special Coordinators would bear them in mind when they start their work.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the Ambassador of India for her important and pertinent suggestions. Since there are no further speakers on the list, I will ask the Conference the question is there agreement to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space? I would recall in this connection that the most recent mandate adopted by the Conference on Disarmament for this Committee is to be found in document CD/1125. I give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Ms. CRITTENBERGER (United States of America): Indeed, much like the subject this morning on the issue of negative security assurances, my delegation has some questions about this particular proposal. We have some concerns about the mandate. The proposal we at least sent back to Washington last night did not include a mandate, although we did indicate it was possible the question would be put with the old mandate and I do indeed have instructions to seek some changes in the mandate. So I am not in a position today to agree to re-establish this ad hoc committee and I would hope that you could initiate some consultations so that we could come to some kind of an agreement on what an appropriate mandate would be.

I would like to briefly explain what the concerns of my delegation are. In our view, there are no weapons in outer space, and there is no arms race in outer space, and therefore no need to prevent one. This really has been our consistent position since this ad hoc committee was first established and we think it would be timely, perhaps, to correct the mandate and the title if we are looking at what such an ad hoc committee might do in the future. So, regrettably, my delegation is not in a position today to agree to re-establish this ad hoc committee, but I would hope that consultations could lead us to a point where this decision could be taken later.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): I have heard with interest the statement that has just been made by the distinguished representative of the United States. I believe that, unlike this morning, she has stated clearly that she will require changes in the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee on Outer Space. My delegation too would be interested to see whether it may be necessary to update the mandate of a committee on outer space. We have some very specific concerns with regard to the work of this committee which we shall also wish to bring to the table when the consultations are held on this subject.

I would therefore suggest, Madam President, that as far as the negative security assurances are concerned we will be, of course, waiting for further word from those of our colleagues who asked for time this morning to examine the proposal that was made by the Ambassador of Sri Lanka and the question which you had put to the Conference.

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

Secondly, we would be prepared to have consultations on the updating of the mandate of the committee on outer space, which has been indicated by the United States, and we hope that, on these two issues, on which we are perhaps closer to agreement than several of the other matters, we will be able to proceed as soon as possible to decisions. If not today, at least at the outset of the resumed session, and I hope that all of us would be in a position to come to a decision at that time on these two issues.

I would see that on the other remaining issues the positions are perhaps more well known and perhaps more divergent, and therefore rather than proceeding with the item-by-item consideration as we have been doing so far, and displaying the same flexibility which we have accepted this afternoon in response to the proposal that you made and was endorsed by the distinguished Ambassador of Austria, my delegation would be prepared to defer consideration of the other items in order to maintain the good atmosphere which has displayed itself this afternoon and to allow you, Madam President, to conduct or resume the consultations on the two issues which we have discussed at the outset of our resumed session.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt): For our part, we are supportive of the re-establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space. The mandate was referred to in document CD/1125. In fact, we kept insisting in the past that the mandate cannot be confined to the confidence- and security-building measures. Surely, the confidence- and security-building measures in the military field in outer space should be taken into consideration while the Conference on Disarmament would negotiate the conclusion of an international agreement or agreements to prevent an arms race in outer space, which remains the fundamental task of the Ad Hoc Committee in conformity with the latest resolution adopted by the General Assembly, that is 51/44. So, we emphasize the necessity of dealing with this matter even if there are no space vehicles that are carrying now, at this particular moment, any missiles or any military equipment, but we reaffirm the importance and urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space from now on, and the readiness of all States to contribute to that common objective in conformity with, and I have to make that reference very clear to everybody, an international instrument which we have negotiated together which refers, in its provisions, to this question, that is the Treaty on the Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

So, my country was one of those which championed this issue before and we are and we have always been one of the co-sponsors of this draft resolution and we have participated in the past in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space and we are willing to cooperate with others, including the distinguished delegate of the United States, for that common and noble objective, which would give assurances to all humanity that there will be no attack or dangers which would come from outer space, the nearest way to target any place in any country all over the globe.

Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka): The subject of prevention of an arms race in outer space has been something in which our delegation has been involved with the delegation of Egypt for a long time, and the Conference too has been spending considerable time on this particular matter in the past few years. There is a saying that prevention is better than cure. Indeed, it may be true that there are no weapons in outer space and that there is no arms race in that domain. But the fact remains that only a decade ago outer space was indeed considered as an area which should be weaponized and there was, indeed, an arms race in outer space. The situation has changed.

In our normal lives, before the winter comes we take flu shots, and I do not think that we should wait until the winter to think about flu shots; it is better to think about it during the autumn; maybe summer is too early. So, we have no objection to the proposal made that we should look into the mandate once again, and look into the title once again. But I hope that, when we meet in July, we will have time to discuss this subject and decide upon a mandate, and, if necessary, a new title.

Mr. MOHER (Canada): I agree with speakers who have said that we need not prolong our meeting this afternoon unnecessarily. And the approach that you, Madam President, had indicated you wished to take, which, as I interpreted it, being a rather simple-minded person, was that we were going to go through a list of questions to which answers would be given "yeah", "nay", "not ready". I have no problems with that. But I was convinced, given my tremendous scepticism this morning about the value of this exercise, by the eloquence of a number of delegations that we should, in fact, go through all of the questions that are before us and having started down that path, I, having been so convinced this morning, find it hard to stop halfway through the exercise.

For example, as you know, Madam President, Canada in CD/1456 has a proposal to re-establish an Ad Hoc Committee on fissile material production, taking into account the agreement on a mandate already reached in this body, and, since what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, I thought we would be allowed to have that question put by you this afternoon as well. So, with all due respect to other members of the Conference and with a promise from our part to say "yeah", "nay" or "not ready", we would like to see all of the questions put.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Canada and I would like to say that that was also how I understood matters. I give the floor to the representative of China.

Mr. WANG (China) (translated from Chinese): I will be very brief in the interest of saving time. With regard to the Ad Hoc Committee on outer space, I would like to emphasize that my delegation has always attached great importance to the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and lent its support in setting up the relevant ad hoc committee to start genuine negotiations. However, as has just been pointed out by the distinguished Ambassador of Egypt, these negotiations cannot be limited to confidence-building measures in outer space. China was a co-sponsor of last

(Mr. Wang, China)

year's United Nations General Assembly resolution on outer space. We are of the view that the mandate contained in CD/1125 should be revised in the light of the General Assembly resolution. We are anxiously waiting for the United States to review this issue from the perspective of preventing the weaponization of outer space and to show flexibility as early as possible. In fact, speaking of the weaponization of outer space, it is no longer a question of prevention, rather it is an urgent issue calling for immediate solution. My delegation will participate actively in the consultation on the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee on outer space.

Ms. GHOSE (India): I was also going to refer to the General Assembly resolution of which we were a co-sponsor with the delegation of Egypt, but I think what the Ambassador of Egypt said covered most of my points. I am a little puzzled on this particular reaction that we have got to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We had this morning, in the context of the NSAs, referred to the position of the Western Group of last November - and I am not referring to the General Assembly resolution, because there were abstentions, nobody against it; it was adopted, there was no one who voted against the resolution on outer space. My question is, what are we to make of these papers which come as a position of the Western Group that they feel that an ad hoc committee on outer space should be established? This is something which is really puzzling me. I think when we put something down on paper and present it to the Conference to get a CD document number, we are serious about that and we would like to actually discuss that. I can understand, of course, when a delegation needs time for instructions; there is no way we can force any delegation to come to start negotiations on that. I am not insisting on that. I am just puzzled by this.

The concluding point I would like to make is to take up what the distinguished Ambassador of Canada said. I do not think that anybody is shying away from anything. Speaking just for my delegation, we are very happy to go through the entire list of the Sri Lankan proposal as it has been put forward. I have something very substantive, in fact, to say under the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. I have been holding on to that since the beginning of this session and have not had an opportunity to say what we would like to say. So, as far as my delegation is concerned, I have no problems whatsoever with continuing down the line and discussing whatever issues are brought to the floor. But what I would like to ask through you, Madam President, is what we are to make of that position paper of the Western Group. Should we not refer to that? It was an official document, it had a CD number. It was not just a non-paper which was floated, testing out people's views. The document was, of course, called "observations". I accept it was observations, these were not proposals, nor were they suggestions, and we find that today we are not able to take a decision on something which the Western Group appeared to have agreed on. This is a question; I do not know whether I will get an answer and therefore, it will remain a question in my mind.

Ms. CRITTENBERGER (United States of America): Although I cannot see the distinguished Ambassador of India, I would be delighted to answer her question. I think that my view is at least that the Western document still stands. We do not table documents we do not stand by. At the same time, I would note that particular paragraph mentions that mandates for the ad hoc committees could be updated. Now, as I think all in this room know, a product of a group negotiation contains a compromise. So this phrase, "the mandates for ad hoc committees could be updated" probably reflects views of those that think it should be and views of those who think it does not need to be. Mine was among those delegations that thought it should be, and thus the phrase "could be updated".

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the United States of America.

Our discussion has shown that there are some delegations which need more time for consultations on this point. As agreed, I will move on to the next question: Is there agreement to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments? I should like to recall in this connection that the most ecent mandate adopted by the Conference on Disarmament for this Committee is to be found in document CD/1150.

I give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): My delegation did not support document CD/1434 of 11 September 1996. My delegation has no objection to saying that it is ready to adopt a decision on the establishment of this committee with its old mandate.

Mr. BAALLAL (Algeria) (translated from French): This morning I said that, when my delegation accepted a decision, it would remain silent and that in the opposite case it might have to ask for the floor. To answer your question, Madam President, I would say that this concept of transparency is at present a very vague, imprecise concept of which the content is still unknown. Contrary to what its name implies, this concept of transparency contains a great deal that is obscure. Many questions are still outstanding. What about military holdings and procurement through national production? What about the very latest weapons? What about weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons? And lastly, what about transfers of technology with military applications? At the current stage of definition, or rather lack of definition of this concept, my delegation is not in a position to accept the establishment of an ad hoc committee on transparency. We do not preclude the possibility of discussing this in the Conference on Disarmament and you can make it a subject of your presidential consultations. In saying this, I am fully consistent with two very important facts. The first is that the Ad Hoc Committee that operated in the Conference on Disarmament under the mandate to which you, Madam President, have just referred - CD/1150 - has completed its work and therefore no longer has any reason to exist, since, in accordance with resolution 46/36 L, on the basis of which the mandate was drawn up, the Secretary-General of the United Nations has been asked to prepare a report taking into account the work of the Conference on Disarmament for submission

(Mr. Baallal, Algeria)

to the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. The Conference on Disarmament has done that work and submitted a report. Therefore, for my delegation, the Ad Hoc Committee on transparency has fulfilled its mandate.

The second important point is that the relevant resolution - of which I unfortunately do not have the number - from the most recent session of the United Nations General Assembly merely invites the Conference on Disarmament to consider continuing its work on transparency. My delegation agrees that we can consider discussing that; it does not agree that we should re-establish an ad hoc committee on transparency.

Mr. WANG (China) (translated from Chinese): Again, I will be very brief. The Chinese delegation does not believe it is necessary to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments this year. Firstly, as has been pointed out by our colleague from Algeria, the mandate of the previous TIA Ad Hoc Committee has been fulfilled. It was precisely on that basis that the United Nations General Assembly adopted the relevant resolution. The second reason is that work has already been done in the CD and relevant arrangements, such as the United Nations Register on the transfer of conventional arms, have already been established. The Register is in the process of being implemented and China has taken part in it. Under such circumstances, if the CD continues to seek or explore some abstract or sweeping TIA measures, my delegation does not see any practical meaning in this. My delegation is not against transparency as a matter of principle. We only feel that all transparency measures are in fact treaty-specific. For instance, China, like many other countries, accepts the IAEA safeguards. That in itself constitutes a transparency measure. We have accepted the on-site inspection provision under the CWC. That, of course, is also a transparency measure. Furthermore, China has concluded bilateral or regional multilateral agreements on confidence-building with some neighbouring countries. An important component of these agreements is the transparency measures. For the reasons listed above, I would like to reaffirm my delegation's belief that it is not necessary to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments in this year's session of the CD. Of course, that does not mean that my delegation is not willing to exchange views with interested delegations on this issue. On the contrary, we are quite ready to do so.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of China. I have on my list of speakers the representatives of Egypt and the United States of America. After that, I would like to review the other points because there is no consensus on them and they are therefore going to have to be the subject of further consultations. I give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt): Madam President. The reason for which I am speaking in English is that the documents which I have at my disposal are in English. Otherwise I could have spoken in Arabic, much better than in English.

It happened that maybe I was the most fortunate amongst all colleagues around this table in that I was the first Special Coordinator on TIA in 1992

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

and I was the first Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Transparency in Armaments in 1993 and through this experience I became disappointed and frustrated because we thought, Madam President, that when we adopted together in 1991 resolution 46/36 L which lubricated the establishment of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, a register which was established where we were pleading that this Register should encompass all weapons and not only seven categories of conventional weapons. We said all weapons without exception, and in particular weapons of mass destruction. So the idea came that, well, let us at least start to establish a register and leave the controversial issues, meaning the stockpiles, national production, the destabilizing accumulation of weapons, the transfer of technology for military purposes and weapons of mass destruction, to the Conference on Disarmament and we will come later in the light of the report of the Conference on Disarmament in 1994 to look at the Register again and to see if we can expand it with the work of the Group of Experts which also made a report in that regard, taking into consideration the report of the Conference on Disarmament, and to see if we can build a body, a mechanism, which would be comprehensive in size to include everything and which would be in fact an early warning in case the accumulation of weapons reached a certain stage that would endanger peace and security, an early warning through the Register. And this is the wisdom behind the whole thing. I wanted just to go back to that history because I lived it personally when we negotiated that resolution 46/36 L in the General Assembly and all through the Conference on Disarmament in 1992 as Special Coordinator, later on as Chairman of that Ad Hoc Committee and as one of the participants in the work of the Conference on Disarmament in this subject matter.

We think transparency should be comprehensive. Transparency should be full, not transparency as far as certain countries are concerned, and not transparency if the matter relates to others. Transparency for everybody and for all things which may endanger peace and security. All weapons, all stockpiles, national production and, in particular, weapons of mass destruction.

Having said this, I want to refer to resolution 51/45 H, which was adopted last year. That resolution, as far as the Conference on Disarmament is concerned, did not recommend the establishment of an ad hoc committee on TIA. It invited the Conference on Disarmament, in its operative paragraph 5, to consider continuing its work undertaken in the field of transparency in armaments. But the whole resolution was related to the Register, to inviting countries to report to the Register the input and output as far as the seven categories of conventional weapons, not more, and also to call on "the Secretary-General with the assistance of a group of governmental experts to be convened in 1997, ... to prepare a report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, taking into account the report of the Disarmament Commission at its 1996 session on the subject of international arms transfers, the work of the Conference on Disarmament, the views expressed by Member States and the 1994 report of the Secretary-General" on the Register, including the report of the Conference on Disarmament on this subject.

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

My delegation has no objection to the creation of that ad hoc committee, on TIA, provided that the mandate should be clear, that there should be full transparency encompassing stockpiles, national production, transfer of high technology with military applications and all weapons of mass destruction. If this is transparency, yes, by all means; if not, I am sorry, we are going to go in circles again and this Conference will not produce the required results. This is why, if you look at the programme of work of the Group of 21, you will find that this is a controversial issue, this is one of the controversial issues which we, in the Group of 21, thought that a Special Coordinator should deal with.

I hope that I was clear.

Ms. CRITTENBERGER (United States of America): Madam President, at your request I will be brief. I think the distinguished Ambassador of Egypt was very clear. This proposal is one that my delegation supports. We could support the re-establishment of the transparency in armaments Ad Hoc Committee. Indeed, we think it is very important. For us, we believe that conventional weapons constitute a threat to stability in the world and the CD should be addressing this issue. So for us it is important.

This morning our delegations came to the table with the argument that ad hoc committees that we had had before with their old mandates should pose no problem in being re-established and, indeed, that proved not to be the case. I guess we had been somewhat hopeful that perhaps TIA and fissile material cut-off treaty, and we have not discussed that yet, could be among those that would be easier to re-establish than perhaps new issues. We are disappointed, but we hope that through consultations this matter can be resolved.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the United States of America for her statement. Since there is no consensus on this matter and delegations need further consultations, I propose to take up the next point. Is there agreement to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament with a mandate such as that contained in the document submitted by the Group of 21, CD/1463? I give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. ASOREY BREY (Spain) (translated from Spanish): On behalf of the Western Group, I have to say, without at the moment getting into the substance of the matter, that the Western Group is not in a position to accept the proposal contained in document CD/1463.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Since it was my delegation which had the honour of introducing the text contained in document CD/1463, I feel it is my duty to make it clear that this is not a document of the Group of 21, but a proposal by 26 delegations. Furthermore, I did not very well understand the question put to the Conference. I understood that there are two different proposals. One is that contained in document CD/1462, which is to establish an ad hoc committee for agenda item 1, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", and the other is on the specific

(Mr. de Icaza, Mexico)

mandate for that ad hoc committee. So, Madam President, with all due respect, I would ask you to clarify, or perhaps the Ambassador of Sri Lanka can clarify to what exactly it is that we are being called on to respond at this point.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Mexico. I should like ask the representative of Sri Lanka to answer the representative of Mexico's question. I give him the floor.

Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka): When I made my proposal yesterday, I spoke of the re-establishment of three Ad Hoc Committees as per the proposal made by the Western Group in document CD/1434. I referred to the fact that an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament had not been established, therefore we will have to establish it. A proposal to this effect is contained in CD/1462, as the Ambassador of Mexico very clearly stated. The proposal is clear and it came from the Group of 21, to which Sri Lanka belongs, and it aims at establishing an ad hoc committee for agenda item 1, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". Subsequently, 26 members belonging to that Group have come up with a proposed mandate, so there are two different proposals really. We could first consider the proposal contained in paragraph 1 of CD/1462, and thereafter we can see whether we could go further with regard to the mandate as contained in CD/1463, if that is possible during the course of the day.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Sri Lanka for his clarifications. I will repeat the question: Is there agreement to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament with a mandate such as that contained in the document submitted by the Group of 21, CD/1462, with the clarification given by the representative of Sri Lanka. I give the floor to the representative of India.

Ms. GHOSE (India): Madam President, you've got me a bit lost, because, as I understood it, the question you asked was amended both by the Ambassador of Mexico and by Sri Lanka and therefore the response of the Western Group is to a question which is now amended. Do you still wish me to take the floor? I'm quite happy to do so. But is the Western Group's response to the proposal to have an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament with or without the mandate in CD/1463? This would be my question, Madam President, after which I have something more to say. Or maybe I should say it straight away, whatever you wish.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of India. To save time, I would like to have the answer to my second question. The representative of India has the floor again.

Ms. GHOSE (India): Well, clearly, Madam President, since India is a member of the Group of 21, we support the establishment of an ad hoc committee. India is also one of the sponsors of the proposed mandate for an ad hoc committee for nuclear disarmament contained in CD/1463, and so clearly, we would also support this particular type of mandate. Now, I would like to take a little time here. We have, and I would like to recall to the Conference that we have not just at this session, but for some time, been

(Ms. Ghose, India)

emphasizing the need, and I would say this is since 1994, but those who've been here longer would perhaps be able to correct me. We have been asking for an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament and we have consistently not been receiving any kind of response except negative, that you will not get an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament.

We talked of priorities this morning. As far as India is concerned, this is our priority in the CD. We do not have any other priorities. This does not mean, as I said in my statement whenever I made it, that we are not willing to discuss other subjects, but our priority, and that was shown when we did not object to the issue on landmines, remains nuclear disarmament. We cannot accept that the Conference on Disarmament, today in 1997, is not in a position to agree to discuss nuclear disarmament. I have been looking at all the papers which have been presented earlier, and I find that even in the proposal of the Canadian delegation, a mechanism was suggested. Last year, when the President was undertaking consultations on this specific issue, several presidents had come down to a mechanism, but we never got off from there. If we are not going to discuss nuclear disarmament, I don't know what we're doing here. We're really playing games.

Let me, for a moment, get back to the proposed mandate, and I would like to emphasize that this is a proposed mandate. The way we see the ad hoc committee is that it will take into account all the different proposals that have come forward from all over the world, whether it be from the Canberra Commission, the Stimson Center, the Pugwash Committee, from members of the Conference on Disarmament, concerning a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons, and this is what we feel the ad hoc committee must address. In the paper, we have seen three clear aspects of the work that the ad hoc committee should in fact undertake. And the first would be an agreement committing all States to the objective of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Now this commitment is something which we have been asking for for some time. We have been told it is there already in the NPT context. We know what happened to NPT commitments in the past, and there is nothing in what is happening in the present which makes us believe that that implementation would change. After all, article VI was there from day one of the NPT, that is since 1968, and the increase of the number of weapons took place despite article VI. Of course now, if we are asked to believe that because of article VI they are going to decrease, that strains our credulity a bit. So we need a commitment at this point, and there is no better place where such a commitment can be negotiated than in the Conference on Disarmament and in an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. And the second sector which we feel the ad hoc committee should look at would be a phased programme, and here we are working on what I already mentioned, that there are suggestions and proposals which have come in from all over the world. And also from 28 members of this Conference. A phased programme with time-frames which would lead to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We have also suggested that this ad hoc committee should set up a working group on a convention on the prohibition of fissile material for nuclear weapons and nuclear explosive devices which would take into account the Shannon Report as well as the various views that have been expressed on this subject.

(Ms. Ghose, India)

Let me, for a minute, tell you what our position is. I will just repeat what I have already said in plenary. I have said that it is our conviction, it is India's conviction that many of the issues which have been raised, which today constitute grey areas of the Shannon Report, and which appear even more grey after two years, that these can be clarified if we adopt a clear work programme that places the mandate for a fissile material cut-off treaty firmly within a multilateral nuclear disarmament process. India remains convinced that a fissile material cut-off treaty can be a useful and necessary step - but as part and parcel of a negotiated, phased programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons. I just quoted that again to say that we are not against discussing fissile material cut-off, despite whatever is being said outside this chamber or to the press, but we do see that this discussion should take place within the context of this ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. This is probably the most important issue to us; not "probably", it is the most important issue to us. So I will not apologize for taking a little more time than I perhaps should.

For us, our being here in the CD is because we feel this is the forum where nuclear disarmament is to be negotiated; otherwise, as I said, the other issues are not of priority to us. We have talked about, and I believe yesterday afternoon when unfortunately I was not here, a separate issue was raised on fissile material cut-off by the Ambassador of Germany and perhaps Austria. For us, fissile material cut-off is in this context. We believe that this issue needs to be addressed, but it can only make sense if it will not be only a non-proliferation, unequal treaty like its precursor, the CTBT - and I think all my colleagues around this table know our attitude toward the CTBT. It will only make sense if it is in such a phased programme. And I think that the proposal we have made in CD/1463 - it does not reflect totally India's position, I must say, it is a group position - but the thrust of what is contained here is what we are prepared to discuss, what we are prepared to look at and it is extremely serious. This is not a rhetorical, if I might use the word, filibustering kind of statement. I am making a substantive point here, and that substantive point is whether we are really serious about disarmament, whether we are really serious about looking at weapons of mass destruction - we have talked about, we have dealt with chemical weapons and we are dealing with, or will be dealing with biological weapons, and we are not, the CD is not to look at nuclear weapons. We are told: if you discuss it here, you will stop the discussions which are taking place at a bilateral level. Not at all! Why should it? Is it in our interest to stop something which we support, that is, the continuous reduction of nuclear weapons held by the two biggest possessors of nuclear weapons? Not at all. But they take it phase by phase in time-frames for their security. But we have our security. We do not belong to any military alliance which gives us security through nuclear weapons; our security is a genuine issue and we're bringing the issue of our security to the CD. And we're saying this is of concern to us, we would like to negotiate this. I think the fact of our seriousness is demonstrated, can be measured by the fact that we have not only signed but ratified the CW, we have opened all our stocks to inspection, all without reservation. So that the international community can go and check. We will bind ourselves to the most stringent regime provided there is an elimination of nuclear weapons by all States.

(Ms. Ghose, India)

At the risk of repeating myself, this is a very serious issue to us; I am not playing games. For us, we agree that a fissile material cut-off treaty can be a very useful step. We are willing to discuss and update - to use the flavour-of-the-month word - update the mandate. But it has to be located in a phased programme which is going to lead to the elimination of nuclear weapons; otherwise why are we doing this? So, I am not disappointed, I am outraged, that our serious proposal is dismissed by one sentence from the Western Group that they do not accept the Sri Lankan proposal, which is the G-21 proposal on a nuclear disarmament ad hoc committee. I am outraged that we will not discuss our security concerns. All right then, let us hear that clear. That we are not willing to discuss your security concerns. We will go away, quite happily. Is that what we have just been told by the representative of the Western Group? That is all for the moment, Madam President. I may come back to this, but I can assure you that on the essentials my position is not likely to change.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt): Madam President, the answer to the question which you have put to us, as far as my delegation is concerned, is positive, is affirmative. Yes, we plead for the establishment of an ad hoc committee for agenda item 1, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". If we really are serious about negotiating disarmament agreements, the highest priority and the utmost, absolute priority for Egypt - and it is also for the rest of the Group of 21, as our Coordinator mentioned time and again in the morning, and it has been repeated by my colleagues, yes, it is the highest priority - a concern of ours, as we have mentioned several times here and in New York and elsewhere, in the NPT conference and the Preparatory Committee for the Conference of the year 2000, and the utmost priority is the concern that article VI, reference to which was made yesterday, has remained unimplemented since 1968 although it speaks of the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament "at an early date". 1968!

That is why we were convinced by those protagonists so that we later on ratified that Treaty - with the objective that the Treaty would lead us to the elimination of all nuclear weapons. Again, I have to refer to the latest NPT Review and Extension Conference of 1995 when we raised our concern about this question, when we were not ready to accept an indefinite extension of the NPT: the lubricator, that is, the decision on "Principles and objectives" which we negotiated mentioned the question of the elimination of nuclear weapons in phases, the phased elimination of nuclear weapons to be negotiated. We welcome any step bilateral or plurilateral to reduce nuclear weapons, but at the multilateral level it is here, this is the forum. And this was the understanding when we accepted the principles and objectives contained in decision 2 of the NPT Conference in 1995. Madam President, in light of that, yes, this is our utmost priority. This is what our Coordinator said and this is the wisdom behind mentioning that at the top of the list of the programme of work of the Group of 21 contained in CD/1462.

As for the mandate, we can look at it, but we have several papers on the mandate. We cannot fail to agree on a mandate if there is a political will to discuss the establishment of an ad hoc committee to deal with this matter of the highest priority to us and to the international community, which was

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

referred to in SSOD-I, that document which was adopted by consensus in 1978. SSOD-I, I wanted to remind everybody of this sacred number, SSOD-I.

Egypt had the honour and pleasure to submit on behalf of 28 countries on 8 August last year a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons which contains three phases and would go through to the year 2020. And in the first phase, I would like to remind the distinguished Ambassador of Canada and our colleagues, in the first phase there is the cut-off. Here we are. There is an opportunity to seize. We have then to establish an ad hoc committee with a mandate where, according to our Programme of Action, in the first phase there is the cut-off. We are serious. And I wanted to refer to decision No. 2 on principles and objectives, where the cut-off is mentioned and also the negotiations on a phased programme for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Read them together. And you can deal with the cut-off within the Programme of Action for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

You have several papers here, we can look at them. There is a paper presented by Egypt; this is CD/1453, which contains a draft mandate for the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. We can look at it. And Egypt is also a co-sponsor with 26 other member States belonging to this Conference and belonging to the G-21 of CD/1463. We have not said that this is a sacred document, but we can look at it in order to find an agreement by consensus on a mandate to advance our work on nuclear disarmament, having in mind the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The cut-off issue is for us a measure of disarmament and this is why it was mentioned in the decision on principles and objectives and this is why, when we negotiated together the report of the Special Coordinator for cut-off, Ambassador Shannon, we referred to that and we did not agree on his report except with reference to that. So, we are serious - let us go ahead, consider the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to deal with item one of the agenda, where we also have to address seriously the question of cut-off.

Mr. BAIDI-NEJAD (Islamic Republic of Iran): It was a matter of surprise for my delegation that we heard a very quick and straightforward objection from the Coordinator of the Western Group to the proposal of the G-21 on agenda item 1. We have really spent so many hours in the G-21 bringing about a compromise position on this agenda item, which has been identified as a high priority by the international community. However, to be absolutely clear, since there could be some confusion about the exact answer and the exact question, can I kindly, through you, get a confirmation from the Western Group and the Coordinator of the Western Group that the Western Group objects to the establishment of an ad hoc committee for the issues under agenda item 1?

Mr. KREID (Austria): Indeed, I have been listening with great attention to what has been said, and we are quite aware that each of the countries represented here has their very clear and understandable security interests. I think this has been presented in a convincing and persuasive manner. I will refrain from speaking about the security interests of my own country. I only want to limit myself to one point. And the point is the following: I think

(Mr. Kreid, Austria)

in previous discussions, when we talked about the approach, it became obvious to many of us that it would be difficult to proceed in a comprehensive manner, so to speak, from point one of a reduction calendar until we reach point, or target, zero.

Now, for this very reason it seems to me we have been working on an approach which would single out certain issues and deal with them individually or, so to speak, in a "piecemeal" fashion without, however, losing sight of the overall goal and target. And we have just been spending many hours this morning on one of these issues which is listed in the first phase of the programme of action which the distinguished Ambassador of Egypt has made reference to, a suggestion of the G-21 from last August, namely the question of negative security assurances. And in the same, in the very same phase, that is first phase between 1996 and the year 2000, we also find the reference to a treaty banning the production of fissile material. So, my point is really, we ought to be consistent, and I do not see why we cannot deal with the item of cut-off in an equal manner in which we proceed to deal with the NSA question, namely, on its own merits. And not in the broad context, much as we would like to be able to do it; we are persuaded that for the time being we will not be very productive in continuing along these lines.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Before I speak, I would, I think, be assisted if the distinguished representative of Spain, on behalf of the Western Group, were to be able to respond to the precise question that has been posed by the distinguished representative of Iran. I would like to take the floor immediately afterwards.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Pakistan. I call on the representative of Spain, in his capacity as the Coordinator of the Western Group, to answer the question that has been asked.

Mr. ASOREY BREY (Spain) (translated from Spanish): My earlier statement was a concrete response to a concrete question that you asked us and that referred to document CD/1463. I listened very attentively to the question of the representative of Iran as I also listened to the statement by the Ambassador of India, and I have to say that the concerns and worries that she expressed and that other representatives have also expressed are perfectly understandable. But what we had to do here this afternoon was to fulfil the task you set us of replying to the concrete questions asked by the representative of Sri Lanka. I think that it is appropriate to be brief and direct in one's replies in order to avoid situations which you yourself did not want to recur as occurred this morning. Just as I responded earlier to a concrete question referring to a concrete document I would like now, to be equally clear. In this regard, I have to say, as Coordinator of the Western Group, that it is my duty to state that our group is not in a position to accept the proposal for the creation of a committee on nuclear disarmament as contained in document CD/1463, nor as it is outlined in document CD/1462. I think that with that I have answered the question from Iran.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt): I heard the answer of the Coordinator of the Western Group and he referred only to two documents. He did not refer to a third document which my delegation made reference to, that is CD/1453. There is also another mandate. We wanted to know how far we can go in this direction. There is another mandate which was submitted earlier by my delegation in document CD/1453; while in the meantime my delegation has also become co-sponsor of CD/1463, I wanted also to know if there is any reaction on the part of the Western Group, the Eastern Group, the Group of One, on CD/1453. This is just for clarification, because later on we will hear some comments on the position of the Western Group.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Egypt, but I believe that the question put by Sri Lanka did not include the document you have mentioned, Mr. Ambassador. If we wish to make progress, I would suggest that we hear the speakers on the list and draw conclusions on the question put by the representative of Sri Lanka. I give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): I would like to express on behalf of the Pakistan delegation our deep disappointment at the dismissal of the proposal of the Group of 21, as well as the proposal of the 26 delegations with regard to nuclear disarmament, by the representative of the Western Group. This dismissal of the demands and aspirations of the majority of the membership of this Conference is a reflection of the reasons why this single multilateral negotiating body has been in an impasse for the past several months.

It is the position of some nuclear-weapon States that they can retain nuclear weapons for an indefinite period of time because they are necessary for their security. We do not believe at this moment, at the end of the cold war, that any of the nuclear-weapon States face threats either from each other or from other States that would require them to retain nuclear weapons. On the contrary, it is the retention of nuclear weapons by a few States that poses an overriding threat to global security and impedes the process of multilateral, regional and bilateral disarmament. As far as my delegation is concerned, the absence of nuclear disarmament has also come to pose an obstacle to the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament in our own region, and therefore we cannot remain indifferent to the fate of proposals for nuclear disarmament within this single, multilateral negotiating body.

If we take this decision of rejection by the Western Group together with the position that was taken this morning with regard to negative security assurances, we are faced with a serious question that impinges on our own security in multifarious ways. In that context, our own positions with regard to several other items for disarmament become extremely complicated. We would therefore continue to urge the nuclear-weapon States, or at least those of them which have opposed disarmament negotiations in this body, and we would appeal to those members of the Western Group who depend on nuclear protection and some of those who have nuclear weapons stationed on their soil, to look beyond their own conditions and look to the threat which is faced by non-nuclear-weapon States which do not enjoy the privileges of the nuclear

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

umbrella. In this context, the proposal for the so-called cut-off treaty also emerges as an unequal proposal. I would like to clarify that for my delegation the so-called cut-off has never been a cut-off, it has always been a proposal for a treaty on nuclear disarmament. That is a position which was espoused by my delegation and by many other delegations, including the lead sponsor of the proposal, which was Canada, for many years: that the fissile materials convention would be a convention that would provide not only for a halt in production, but also for the progressive reduction of stockpiles so that we would achieve the goal of nuclear disarmament.

That objective was thrown out of the window at a certain point in time by certain Powers. We cannot accept that. We have always insisted that a cut-off is not sufficient, and the fact that people continue to insist on just a cut-off is insufficient to meet the security concerns of my country. We will therefore continue to insist that the so-called fissile materials convention should be a measure for disarmament, and being a measure for disarmament, we have joined together with the 26 delegations in proposing that this item, this issue, should be dealt with under the item on nuclear disarmament and in the framework of the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. This is the position which has been taken by my delegation. It is in the documents. And I hope that our position is sufficiently clear for all delegations.

Mr. DUARTE (Brazil): When we started having today's debate, we were asked to reply to a series of questions about the possible adoption of certain procedures or mechanisms, but the turn of the debate shows that the relationship between what seemed like procedural decisions and substantive ones is very narrow, and we have really engaged in substantive discussions of a very important nature. And that requires a statement from my delegation to put on record the position that we take on this issue.

Of course, Brazil subscribes to the proposals contained in CD/1462 and CD/1463. We have participated in that. I also would like to recall that just yesterday the permanent representative of Brazil, Ambassador Lafer, announced the decision of the Government of Brazil to submit to Congress the accession of Brazil to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. On that occasion, we made a statement regarding the spirit and the rationale behind this decision of the Government of Brazil, and we stressed the importance that we attached to the fulfilment of the commitment contained in article VI of that treaty, and we also recalled the recent advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice about the need to engage in serious negotiations about the elimination of nuclear weapons.

It is therefore clear that this is the spirit in which Brazil is taking this decision and proposing to its parliament the accession of Brazil to this important international treaty. We are, therefore, very disappointed about the reaction given to the proposal that has been submitted to the Conference today. We in the Group of 21 have considered that this was a constructive and comprehensive proposal. It also encompasses the issue of cut-off. The Government of Brazil has showed a very open and flexible position with regard to this issue in the past, and we continue to consider that also as an

(Mr. Duarte, Brazil)

important issue, but we also believe that it has to be taken from the point of view of disarmament as well. And in that respect, I think that the proposal of the Group of 21 contained in this document was sufficiently comprehensive. This is the position that I want to put on record on behalf of my delegation.

Ms. GHOSE (India): I am sorry to take the floor again on this subject, but I did want to reply to the specific point raised by Ambassador Kreid of Austria. The reason why the G-21 - and I'm not speaking on behalf of the G-21, but as a member and a participating member - why we had suggested a separate ad hoc committee on NSAs was because there is a separate agenda item for it. I wish our programme of action was the agenda for the CD. Unfortunately, it is not. The agenda for the Conference that we have adopted by consensus has an agenda item 4, which deals with NSAs, and for that we suggested the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee to discuss it.

We also have agenda item 1, which has also been adopted by consensus and that item is "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". And we are suggesting very consistently an ad hoc committee be established to deal with this subject. It is not a question of our being selective. To a certain extent, yes, I suppose we could have had an ad hoc committee on new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons, radiological weapons, under agenda item 5. We could have, but what we have done is, what was priority for us, we have put it here. And that is the answer to the specific question.

On the issue of fissile material cut-off, which Ambassador Kreid raised - and I'm being very careful in what I say - we see this as a part of a phased programme which would lead to the elimination of nuclear weapons, a phased programme of disarmament. We are not saying that our programme of action of the G-28, should be the programme; it is a basis on which we can start discussions. But so far, since we tabled it there has been no effort to even discuss our programme of action. When, on 14 March 1996, the G-21 asked for an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament and we put in a mandate, a very brief mandate, it was not discussed. All right, we were very busy discussing something else. Then we were asked, well, you want an ad hoc committee, what should the Ad Hoc Committee discuss? And we came out with a programme of action. And that, too, was not discussed.

If we are going to knock nuclear disarmament off the agenda of the CD, I do not know how long the interest of a large number of our countries will remain in this forum. We have been told from many of the countries of the Western Group, that, if you don't agree with us, the CD will fold up. Words to that effect. If the CD does not discuss nuclear disarmament, it does not matter if it does fold up. The overall effort that we have seen, and not just in the CD, is somehow to get nuclear disarmament off the international agenda. That is something we cannot agree to. We will not agree with that. And therefore we have to take a view on how we are going to deal with a subject on which some of us have such strong feelings - and they are not just feelings: they are, as all the delegations of the G-21 have mentioned, or most of them who have spoken, matters relating to their security, and if that is not considered important enough, then what are we doing here? We are not here to

(Ms. Ghose, India)

participate in discussions about other people's security; they don't want us to discuss that in any case. But we are told that this is our security and you must do this for our security.

No, I think that we really have reached an important stage. I do not wish to stop anything just now but, as I said, I am more than disappointed; I am disappointed that from the entire Western Group and the entire Eastern Group - I'm not mentioning the Group of One because I know the Group of One's position on this - but the entire Western Group and the entire Eastern Group have dispensed with what the G-21 has repeatedly said is its top priority with one curt sentence: "We do not accept." All right, if that is what is going to happen, there are lots of things which we cannot accept also. And I think we will then perhaps have to take a long breath, a very deep breath, and see whether we are here to promote cooperation, or whether we are here to promote the issuing of orders by one group so that the rest of us ultimately are beaten down to saying, "OK, we will accept." If that is where we are going, I feel more than disappointed. But the reason I'm taking the floor was really to reply to Ambassador Kreid.

Mr. BAIDI-NEJAD (Islamic Republic of Iran): Normally when we have so many papers, we have confusions. I listened very carefully to the statement of the distinguished representative of Spain as the Coordinator of the Western Group, and I heard him state that his Group cannot agree with the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. He rightly pointed out that the basis of the decision should be the proposal by Sri Lanka. And I heard the distinguished representative of Sri Lanka was referring to the suggestion for the establishment of an ad hoc committee not on nuclear disarmament, but for agenda item 1, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament." So, we have heard no objection to that proposal and it is not expected that the Western Group would oppose such a suggestion, because then it is meant that the Western Group is really opposing the establishment of an ad hoc committee on agenda item 1 even to negotiate cut-off, while we know that the cut-off should be negotiated under agenda item 1. So I think that still the suggestion by the Group of 21 is on the table and we hope that in the inter-sessional period we could have some more consultations on that proposal.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): I will be as brief as my concern permits. We have heard from the distinguished representative of Spain a flat rejection, an absolute, unreasoned rejection of the proposal contained in document CD/1462 regarding the establishment of a committee for agenda item 1 and an equally flat, laconic rejection of the mandate contained in document CD/1463. In contrast to what was said on the establishment of other machinery, where it was stated that further consultations were needed or time for reflection was needed or it was necessary to seek instructions, on nuclear disarmament we have heard from the Coordinator of the Western Group a categorical no, what my Spanish friend would call a slap in the face.

This would be very serious if we were to take it literally as it appears, but the distinguished delegate of Spain will allow me not to believe him. I don't believe him because I have some documents before me. I have

(Mr. de Icaza, Mexico)

here a document dated 15 May, document CD/1456 from Canada, which speaks of that friendly country's views on the agenda and programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament and in the second paragraph it says: (continued in English) "The CD must address nuclear disarmament; it should establish a mechanism for the substantive discussion of nuclear disarmament issues with a view to identifying if and when one or more issues should be the subject of negotiation." (continued in Spanish) I have here what an eminent member of the Western Group says. I am sure that it was not the intention of the delegation of Canada to close the door on us laconically as has been done today. I also have here what was said yesterday by our distinguished friend, Hisami Kurokochi of Japan. I will read it: (continued in English) "Beyond the CTBT and FMCT, as an agenda for the international community as a whole, we should continue our efforts to find appropriate and possible issues for negotiations in the CD in the field of nuclear disarmament. It could be done by appointing a special coordinator, as my delegation proposed during the first session." (continued in Spanish) Obviously the "no" is not as categorical as it seemed, and we still have some hope; I welcome that fact, because if we didn't have that hope, this Conference would have lost its raison d'être.

Of course, I do not envy the coordinators to be appointed today their task because, if we are not going to talk about nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament, I don't know what the coordinator on the agenda is going to do; if we don't have an agenda, I don't know what the coordinator on functioning is going to work on because we are not in a functioning Conference, and I don't know what the coordinator on expansion is going to do, because what's the use of our expanding the Conference if its not going to do anything? Of course, God forbid that I should be establishing linkages. We all know that the countries members of the Group of 21 cannot establish linkages. For them, linkages have been demonized, although for others they are coming to be sanctified. I am not establishing linkages, but it seems to me that there is a linkage when someone says in the Conference on Disarmament, "everything but nuclear disarmament, anything but nuclear disarmament". Let's take the weapon that is in vogue, whichever it may be, whether it has an impact on global and international security or not so long as we don't talk about nuclear disarmament.

I will tell you where that course will lead us: we will end up submitting to the First Committee this year a report saying: "The Conference spoke, the members of the Conference also had lunch, special coordinators were appointed, and on no item was it possible to reach even the slightest agreement on beginning any negotiations." Is that what we want? Certainly, with rejections such as we have heard today, that is where we are leading, because you know, Madam President, categorical and laconic rejections are contagious.

Mr. FASEHUN (Nigeria): I shall be very brief. But, in brevity, we think it is important to look at the origin and history of this particular forum and to see what it has done especially regarding nuclear issues. This forum negotiated NPT, the non-proliferation measure to which Nigeria is a party. It negotiated CTBT, another non-proliferation measure which the

(Mr. Fasehun, Nigeria)

Government of Nigeria is studying. In almost 40 years of existence through various expansions, it has not been allowed to negotiate on the most singular important weapon mankind has ever evolved. When we go to the history of armament, we know that the sub-machine gun is under 125 years old. Nuclear weapons are approaching 50. So what would be a more fitting present to the twenty-first century than to address the issue of a weapon system that can change civilization? It has been argued that a nuclear weapon is a hypothetical weapon. Hiroshima is not hypothetical. Chernobyl is not hypothetical. The consequences of this - of even leakage - we know. It is not a weapon system that perhaps technology can make obsolete. Indeed, technology only improves it and, with the improvement, its ability to kill massively, to distort civilizations, to destroy the environment. If we are worried about punching the ozone layer, are we not perhaps worried about perhaps handing over to unborn generations deformities?

We are members of nation States and nation States, of course, come and go, they will change, they contract, they expand, blocs are formed. But nuclear weapons in the possession of certain States are inherently unstable and destabilizing. Those who have possession want to keep it. Others have been asked not to have it because, supposedly, they are the underdogs or because they are supposed to run or operate on unstable political systems. But the same instability which occurs in the so-called developing countries can also mar developed countries. We have seen it in history - I am sorry to refer to western Europe. Extreme regimes can come into the possession of nuclear weapons and then we can see what can happen. So, to come back to today and the CD, the appeal for a committee is not new this year. I mean, I have now been in the CD for three years and I met it on the ground. Certain delegations were persuaded in 1995 to let the Ad Hoc Committee on the Comprehensive Test Ban continue to work. And this year again we are told it is an absolute no - despite the fact that we know that even within the Western Group and as quoted by Ambassador de Icaza, there are differences of opinion.

Shying away from discussing the issue of nuclear disarmament is like playing the ostrich burying its head in the sand. The problem will not go away. It will be here. And we shall always ask for it until we have an ad hoc committee that can seriously address the most important weapon system mankind has ever evolved. We believe our collaborators and partners should think again. If you want to encourage non-proliferation, start multilateral discussions on nuclear disarmament. Selective application of non-proliferation, selecting certain areas for discussion in this so-called sole negotiating body does not advance the security of States. It does not advance global security; it only advances the security of certain States, the powerful ones. What our system tell us is that those that are powerful today may not be powerful for ever. So we do need to invest in future security. And that is why we are calling for an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament to ponder on the problems for the twenty-first century so that we can start putting these horrible weapons where they belong - get rid of them.

Mr. BAALLAL (Algeria) (translated from French): I asked for the floor because I cannot remain indifferent to the reaction of the Western Group. There has been a rejection in its entirety and in detail of the proposal to establish an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament. In fact, my concern stems not from this flat and categorical rejection without a single following comment; my delegation's concern stems from the fact that there is a total lack of willingness to discuss the proposal or to take it as a basis for discussion. At no time did I note any reference whatsoever to the slightest willingness, the slightest disposition to discuss it. It is this lack of any prospect of discussion, this lack of openness, this extreme position that really worry my delegation, whose final conclusion from the response we have received is not that there is a refusal to negotiate in the CD - though negotiation is our priority - but that there is a refusal even to consider discussing it.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Algeria for his statement. I take it that making a decision on this question today is not possible and this question requires further consultation. So I will put the question again in informal consultations during the inter-sessional period. I now invite the Conference to take a decision on the proposal by Germany to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on a Ban on the Production of Fissile Material for Nuclear Weapons or Other Nuclear Explosive Devices. In this regard I would like to recall that the mandate of that Committee as drafted by Ambassador Shannon in 1995 is contained in document CD/1299. Is there agreement in the Conference to re-establish this Committee with the mandate contained in document CD/1299? I give the floor to the representative of India.

Ms. GHOSE (India): I do not know what I can do to express my outrage, the gall I feel. We had used this word last year, which I was told was not an Americanism but chutzpah. We have just been told we will not discuss nuclear weapons, and there is a proposal that we are being asked to consider: the establishment of an ad hoc committee on FMTC, a subject on which my position and that of the Group of 21 was made clear. We have talked about a phased programme. We have even been told that the door, to quote Ambassador de Icaza, has been slammed in our face or that your face has been slapped or whatever it was he said. Can we have all this over again? I wish I could be as laconic and as categorical as the representative of Spain, who was speaking on behalf of the Western Group. We have just - not even an hour ago - talked precisely on this issue. And we have said how we see this issue. And we have said: yes, if you want to discuss cut-off, here is a proposal; you discuss it in a phased programme. What is it we are doing? Madam President, I am surprised that you even asked this question. Maybe the Ambassador of Germany had a point yesterday when he put it forward. Maybe he had not read the G-21 paper. Or maybe he had not at that point decided to reject it outright. But now we are being told that we discuss only FMCT and we will not discuss nuclear disarmament, we will not have an ad hoc committee under agenda item 1; we will not discuss your concerns. I am sorry, Madam President, I need an answer to this. I want to know whether we are here discussing our security concerns or whether these are to be completely overturned. If the answer to that is yes, I will leave just now. I will get up and walk out. I am worse

(Ms. Ghose, India)

than outraged that this should be raised at this point in time. If it had been taken up before we discussed the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament, okay; I would perhaps have had a slightly different response. But now! I am sorry, I just want an answer to my question. On what grounds is this proposal being put forward after we have had our proposal so summarily rejected? On what basis?

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of India. I have heard all the reactions this afternoon, but since my task was to ask the questions put by the representative of Sri Lanka I was also obliged to ask the question put by the representative of Germany. I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka.

Mr. GOONETILLEKE (Sri Lanka): Madam President, you have asked a question and I think we have to give you an answer. So I will keep it very brief. My delegation has no difficulty in accepting the establishment of an ad hoc committee on fissile cut-off on the basis of the Shannon report and also taking into consideration paragraph 3 of document CD/1463. When we are ready to take a decision on the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament together with that, I am sure we all will be able to discuss the question of cut-off.

Mr. MOHER (Canada): Well, at 6.05 p.m. on a Friday night before some of us start holidays, I want to make sure that I do not start holidays with Ambassador Ghose being furious with me. The question that you put, Madam President, is, I think, a valid one and we specifically asked you or reminded you to do so. That is not in any way a sign of disrespect to the Ambassador of India or to any other delegation. The earlier discussion that took place with reference to FMCT took place in response to an earlier question you put, where FMCT had been integrated by a group of delegations into a different proposed mandate. I have no surprise at all at the fact that, having put the question specifically on FMCT - not in connection with any other topic - the answer is going to be at the minimum that this group is not ready to take a decision on this at this time. And that, I think, this is where we should conclude. We are at 6.05 on a Friday night. But I do quite frankly, Madam President, think this delegation for one should at least support the fact that you asked the question and you did so at least at our request. I think we have had the issue explored and I have no problems in concluding with you that we are not ready at this point to take a decision. But if I got you into trouble before you start your July, I apologize.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): My understanding is the same as that of the distinguished delegate of Canada. We are starting now at this late hour talking about different things. My understanding was that we were asked to give our views on CD/1463, in which cut-off and nuclear disarmament are put in a specific context, and that that did not meet with approval. But we clearly consider cut-off as an issue of nuclear disarmament and by doing so, of course, we can talk about nuclear disarmament. This is, at least, the understanding of my delegation. I would be disappointed if this discussion led to the conclusion that such an important issue as cut-off could not be treated in this Conference. I think that at this late stage we will probably

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

not be able to have an agreement, but I would hope that we will all start taking into account what has been said today - take that with us during the recess and take all the opportunities to consult with you, Madam President, and hopefully come back with some further enlightenments late in July at our next session.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt): Very briefly, the answer to the question which you have put to us lately, Madam President, was made in my previous statement, that is, that we are ready to discuss cut-off under item 1 with the establishment of an ad hoc committee to deal with item 1. I made it clear that we have presented a programme of action, the first phase of which is "cut-off". We are ready to deal with that phase by phase, step by step, and one of the first steps to take is cut-off. So we are serious about it, but we are disappointed that the Conference on Disarmament is unable to make a decision on the establishment of an ad hoc committee to deal with item 1. That would surely facilitate the discussion of cut-off and helps us to address cut-off seriously as a measure of disarmament. So, my conclusion in two words is that I hope that the Western Group and others who share their views will review their position in this regard, and prevent the Conference on Disarmament from going into a stalemate.

Mr. ASOREY BREY (Spain) (translated from Spanish): Just two words to say that I didn't want us to leave this room with the bad taste in our mouths that I discerned in some of the statements made after I, in my capacity as Coordinator of the Western Group, expressed our group's position on a specific issue. The first thing I want to say is that the task for this afternoon was to make progress in our work, to answer the questions raised by the Ambassador of Sri Lanka, and we felt, and I continue to think, that we were interpreting the feeling of the Conference in being brief, in going from one subject to another as was proposed and as you, Madam President, wished. The laconic style that some delegations have reproached me for using was due solely, on the one hand, to the mandate that, logically I had - and everyone here knows perfectly well, better than I, how things work in such situations - and on the other, to the concern that we should advance and not dwell at length on theoretical considerations. Consequently, I should like the perspective in which our position was expressed to be clear. There was - and here I am afraid I disagree with the distinguished representative of Algeria - absolutely no lack of will, no absence of intention to move forward on items. It was a matter of seeing to it that we all go away this evening with a clear idea on which topics there is consensus and on which there is not. Naturally there will be discussions on the substantive issues, but the main objective here today, this afternoon, was to make as much progress as possible on the proposals by the representative of Sri Lanka, and I sincerely think that the Western Group has tried to do this as clearly as possible, with good will and a desire that we really should go away this evening with something solid. If any delegation felt that the way in which this position was expressed was abrupt, I want to say that that was absolutely not the case, that it was expressed with the greatest respect for the positions of all countries and that we feel that sometimes it is, frankly, better to be brief, to say little in order to make progress.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): Usually, proposals, especially procedural proposals that emanate from my friend, Ambassador Mark Moher of Canada, lead to the application of a soothing balm on most very difficult situations, but this afternoon, as I had feared, I believe that pressing on with the consideration of what we knew are difficult items on the agenda has perhaps once again and unfortunately transformed what 90 minutes ago was a good atmosphere and a sense of at least some movement in the Conference into one of, what shall I say, acrimony and outrage.

My delegation cannot say that we are outraged, we cannot afford to be outraged: we are dealing with our security. And in that context, I would like to say that the position of my delegation on the proposal that the distinguished Ambassador of Germany has made has been clearly stated in the context of the previous discussion we had on the issue of nuclear disarmament. I would like to draw attention again to document CD/1463 which contains the positions of 26 countries with regard to nuclear disarmament and in which it is stated that under the ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament we would take up a convention on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and nuclear explosive devices, taking into account the report of the Special Coordinator on this item - it is the Shannon report - and I would emphasize the following words: "and the views relating to the scope of the treaty".

We have underlined time and again the issue which I referred to earlier, that is, that for us the fissile materials convention has to be a convention for nuclear disarmament and not merely a treaty for non-proliferation. And we will press that point whenever we come to take up this issue in this Conference.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico)(translated from Spanish): Madam President, in the first place, I have to say that my delegation is aware that yesterday this proposal was made by the representative of Germany and that he asked that action be taken on it and that today it was repeated by the Ambassador of Canada, and for my delegation at any rate it seems quite appropriate that you should have asked the question. My delegation has no special problem with the establishment of an ad hoc committee on fissionable material. My delegation has made great efforts to find a solution that would allow us to begin negotiations. Within the Group of 21, it was to my delegation that it fell to coordinate the efforts to come up with this third paragraph of document CD/1463. It seems to me that the other groups in the Conference have not realized what great progress there has been in positions. It should be placed on record that on fissile material the Group of 21 has not given a flat and absolute refusal. It should be placed on record that we have made efforts to find a way to negotiate on it and it should also be placed on record that those efforts have not been appreciated.

Ms. CRITTENBERGER (United States of America): At this late hour I will be brief. My delegation is not outraged or surprised, we're perhaps a bit disappointed. It was said earlier that we had not engaged on the question of nuclear disarmament in this Conference, and that indeed, of course, is not true. And it was only perhaps because you had just heard us speak this week and you also heard us speak in May on this subject and also in informal consultations that we did not take up the time to address the substance of the issue at this meeting today. We certainly are prepared to do so and we have never shied away from discussion of the issue itself.

The question, though, is - and the issue has been put in terms of phases or steps - what steps could be taken in this context, and indeed in our view a number of steps are already under way. They are not taking place at this particular time in this forum. We believe that at least one should, and that should be fissile material cut-off. And for that reason we think it should stand alone as an issue for discrete addressal, and indeed we are prepared to take up the nuclear disarmament issue and it would be fissile material cut-off.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of the United States for her statement. I propose that we resume discussion of this question as soon as we begin the third part of the session.

Dear colleagues, we have thus come to the end of our plenary meeting and of the second part of our session. We can rejoice in the fact that the Conference has been able to take a few steps, albeit modest steps, towards the establishment of our programme of work. We have appointed four special coordinators on landmines, expansion of the Conference, the agenda and the improved and effective functioning of the Conference. I am sure that they are going to take up their tasks with determination. We have also had an in-depth exchange of views on all of the other agenda items and on the mechanisms to be established to consider them. It is clear that we shall have to hold intensive consultations in the inter-sessional period and to revert to those issues with the necessary spirit of flexibility as soon as we resume our work on 28 July. I suggest, therefore, that we hold informal consultations starting at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 29 July, in this room in order to pursue our efforts to establish ad hoc committees on the items on which consensus is reached. I hope that this proposal is acceptable to you.

I have a request for the floor from the representative of Iran. You have the floor.

Mr. BAIDI-NEJAD (Islamic Republic of Iran): I'm sorry that I have asked for the floor at this late hour, but I think in order to pave the way for a more focused discussion in the inter-sessional period and the third part of the session, it is important to capture the main result of the discussions in these two days on the establishment of the ad hoc committees. From the discussions, one can judge that there is no objection in principle to the

(Mr. Baidi-Nejad, Islamic Republic of Iran)

establishment of at least two ad hoc committees, namely NSA and outer space, but there is a need for some further consultations on the mandate of these two ad hoc committees. So I think the confirmation of such a result from today's discussions would provide us with a good ground for consultations, would make us more optimistic for the near future, and would demonstrate that we have not wasted our time from yesterday till this late hour. So, Madam President, I would ask that you would, in your summary, have that kind of statement that would pave the way for a more focused discussion in the inter-sessional period and the third part of the session.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Iran.

The next plenary meeting will be held at 10 a.m. on 31 July.

The meeting rose at 6.25 p.m.